



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

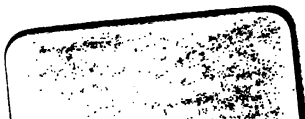
### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





600064628W







THE  
BOND OF HONOUR

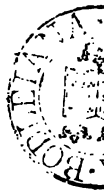
A Heart-History.

"Gefühl ist alles."—FAUST.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

*Nov 11*



LONDON:  
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,  
Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty.  
1870.

[All Rights Reserved.]

*250. y 88.*

1

TO THE SOUL  
OF THE NOBLEST POET-ROMANCER  
THE WORLD HAS EVER SEEN—  
THAT VERITABLE HIGH-PRIEST IN THE TEMPLE OF NATURE,\*  
WHO CONTENTED EVER  
FOR THE SOVEREIGNTY OF SENTIMENT†  
OVER THE COARSE EXTERNALISM OF INCIDENT,  
AND STROVE TO TEACH MANKIND  
THAT IN THE HUMAN HEART ALONE  
IS THE TRUE INTEREST OF LIFE CONCENTRED—

JEAN PAUL—

THIS HUMBLE ATTEMPT  
TO REVIVE, IN A REALISTIC AGE,  
SOMEWHAT OF THE SPIRIT OF HIS TENDER IDEALISM,  
IS, WITH ALL AFFECTION AND REVERENCE,

Inscribed.

---

\* "Der hohe Priester, der für uns gebetet im Tempel der Natur."  
Ludwig Börne: *Denkrede auf Jean Paul*.  
"Im Kampfe für die Freiheit des Fühlens steht er allein."  
*Ibid.*





## CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

---

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. IN MEDIAS RES . . . . .	I
II. A RETROSPECT . . . . .	24
III. EARLY HOURS . . . . .	36
IV. "STOLE AWAY" . . . . .	52
V. "TOUT EST PERDU FORS L'HONNEUR" . . . . .	59
VI. FROM MAINZ TO BONN . . . . .	70
VII. GERMAN HUMOUR . . . . .	106
VIII. TWO NEW ACQUAINTANCES . . . . .	126
IX. THE SPINNERSTRASSE AND ONE OF ITS IN- HABITANTS . . . . .	145
X. PAR PARENTHÈSE . . . . .	167
XI. FLORENCE LOVELL . . . . .	187
XII. DIES AMBROSII . . . . .	207
XIII. LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT . . . . .	228
XIV. "DOLCE REGINA DELLA NOTTE!" . . . . .	244
XV. "THE OLD, OLD STORY" . . . . .	265
XVI. FONS ET ORIGO . . . . .	286



600064628W





his seat, whilst an expression half of mockery, half of misery, flitted across his face. His companion looked at him in a puzzled way for a moment, and then said :

"I cannot understand you English. I am never sure whether you are in jest or earnest."

"Many a true word, you know, is spoken in jest," answered the other, "and many a false one in earnest," he added bitterly. "But let us see if this expedition to Rolandseck is to come off to-day or not."

He moved as if to go into the house, but his companion stopped him.

"You had better wait here until I see how matters stand." And so saying she disappeared.

Left alone the Englishman flung himself by a kind of national instinct upon the ground—for they had been sitting in the garden—and then turned his eyes to drink in the familiar but ever-glorious scene that lay before him. As he reclined upon the sloping lawn of the little garden, he saw the sheeny Rhine, instinct with the life of motion, whilst in the distance, warm with the purple flush of summer afternoon, rose the varied peaks

the Siebengebirge. To the right, the eye rested upon a narrow plain, bounded by wood-clad hills, and in the midst of the plain, in quaint contrast with its flatness, the turreted hill of Godesberg stood out sharply against the azure sky. The face of nature shone in its fairest aspect ; all things breathed of life and strength and hope.

The Englishman's face brightened as he gazed. It was not in human nature to behold such a scene unmoved. Still less was it in a nature such as his—keenly poetic in its every fibre. His eye rested on the scene like the eye of a lover on his mistress ; not the cold admiration of the critic—not the eager appreciation of the artist—but the deep passionate affection of the poet, glowed in the fervour of his gaze. Again and again it travelled over the scene, until the joy of his heart broke out in a strange light upon his face, and, forgetting for the moment all else beside, he exclaimed :

“ Life is worth having after all ! ”

“ I congratulate you upon your discovery,” said a voice at his elbow, “ though made rather late.”

“ And expressed in an unguarded moment,” added the Englishman, looking rather confused, as all Englishmen do when caught unawares in a piece of sentiment ; “ but, seriously, as you say, ‘ *Wie schön !* ’ How beautiful ! ”

“ Ah, beautiful indeed ! ” and the German lady, never tired of the loveliness of the Vaterland, bent her eyes affectionately on the well-known scene.

As she thus stood and gazed, the Englishman scanned her unobserved, and thought her not unworthy to stand in the foreground of so perfect a landscape. She was indeed beautiful ; tall and commanding in stature, she possessed a wealth of dark hair, which fell banner-like over her shoulders, and set in lustrous ebony features that were themselves a picture. Black eyes, which sparkled generally with the light of a vivacious merriment, yet which could sometimes speak of tranquil thought, gave an infinite variety of expression to a countenance which might perhaps otherwise in its regular beauty have been deemed too statuesque. The smooth white brow, the straight nose, the perfectly-shaped mouth, and a complexion fair as that of the daughters of Albion, com-

bined with her stately figure, made Fräulein Louise Bonngart, what she was generally acknowledged to be, the beauty of Bonn.

There she stood, in the ripe sunlight of the afternoon—pure, perfect in outward form and feature as an antique statue—gratifying every artistic taste, like some grand creation of Praxiteles or Phidias. She was clever, too, this German Fräulein. She could almost draw tears from your eyes as she played and sang in the sweetest of sweet voices the touching songs of Vaterland. She talked French and English with the barest suspicion of an accent, and the faintest leavening of her own idioms. She dressed, too, with a taste and elegance very rare indeed amongst her countrywomen, who are more famous in general for reverencing utility than art in the adornment of their persons; and if in the little niceties of daily life she comported herself as the German Fräulein rather than the English lady, the Englishman was superior to prejudice, and could well make allowance for a difference in manners.

It was not then to be wondered-at that there had sprung up between him and Louise an intimacy even closer than their living



under the same roof would of itself have engendered. His was not a nature on which so much beauty, amiability, and talent could fail to produce a strong impression. He admired Louise greatly, and his admiration was wont to evince itself by many little acts of homage, which were sometimes, without any intention on his part, calculated to give rise to the idea that his feeling towards her was of a deeper character than was really the case. For however dangerous such an intimacy between a young man and a handsome woman must of necessity be, Arthur Vaughan's heart had hitherto remained unscathed. The fact was that Louise, with all her charming qualities, did not quite satisfy his poetic instincts. Her beauty, her talents, her nature itself were in a way conventional—founded it is true on perfect types, but still lacking that originality and vivid freshness which above all things the poet craves. And so it had come to pass that, though he had been for two months thrown into constant intercourse with her, and every day had tended to ripen his admiration, his love (in the supreme sense of the word) had not been stirred. Had it been, he would

doubtless have abstained from paying her many of those *petits soins*, which now came so naturally to him in the exercise of a kind of brotherly friendship ; but he had taught himself to believe that it was impossible for him now to love, as it was certainly impossible for him to gratify any such affection. A melancholy past had (so he thought) absorbed into its remorseless bosom all chance of such happiness as is summed up in the words, "to love and to be loved." And deeming himself thus unable to return the affection of another, he would have shrunk above all things from giving the impression that he could under any circumstances become a suitor.

As he still gazed at the lovely figure before him, Louise suddenly turned round and caught his eye resting upon her.

Accepting with some inward satisfaction this tribute to her attractions, she exclaimed :

"Still dreaming, Mr. Vaughan ? How lazy you are ! It is time for us to start."

"So you *are* going ! I am delighted to hear it. Is everyone ready ?"

"Everyone, I fancy, except a certain Englishman," answered the young lady, laughing.

"The 'certain' (or rather *uncertain*) Englishman is also ready," replied Vaughan, springing up lightly. "Ah! here they come."

At this moment a party of four other persons emerged from the house and joined them. It consisted of a stout gentleman, who carried his age well, and, though past sixty, seemed almost as erect and vigorous as a man of forty—his wife, younger in years, but more advanced in infirmity—a daughter, considerably older than Louise, and giving no indication of similar beauty—and a son, who was evidently the youngest of the family.

"Let us start," said the old gentleman in German; "we have not much time to catch the train."

With that they began to move. Herr Bonngart went first with his wife, the brother and the elder sister followed, whilst Vaughan and the fair Louise brought up the rear.

From the Coblenzerstrasse to the station is some distance, and in a hot summer afternoon the walk is by no means a pleasant one. The party, however, reached the station in time for the three o'clock train, and were soon

being borne along with that sober steadiness which is the invariable characteristic of Teutonic trains. On they went, through the loveliest scenery of the Rhine, for nearly an hour, until in due time they found themselves at the Stationsgebäude at Rolandseck. It was one of those occasions on which the military band from Bonn played to a select audience in the public gardens.

Louise still kept by Vaughan. It might be because she alone of her family spoke English and he as yet knew but little German; or it might be, as one or two of her acquaintances hinted to each other while they watched the pair, that she took an interest other than pitying (though perhaps akin to it), in the young Englishman. However this might be, they sauntered about together, generally behind the other members of their party, and enjoyed the lovely scenery and balmy air in the intervals of a sprightly conversation.

"You ought to be happy in a land like this," said Vaughan, after a long look at the sunbright mountains.

"I do not quite see why we ought to be; but I hope we are," answered his companion.

"I will tell you why you ought to be. Because, with so fair a country and so soft a climate, you can find all the happiness you want in nature—all-sufficient nature—and need not look for it in your fellow-creatures."

"Ah! so young, and a misanthrope!" cried the girl, laughing.

"Pardon me! Neither young nor a misanthrope, but old, at least in experience, and in consequence distrustful."

"I see how it is. You expect perfection, and because you cannot find it you are melancholy. I am sorry to make you more so, but our climate is certainly anything but perfect. What is it you say—'One swallow does not make a summer, nor one fine day?'"

"A proverb as old as Aristotle," ejaculated Vaughan, "and as useless."

"I do not see that things are useless because they are true."

"No; but a truth that everyone *feels* is weakened, not strengthened, by being put into words. Which," he added in his mocking way, "do you, as a lady, think the most important, feelings or words?"

Had Louise been a French girl, she would

probably have answered in as mocking a manner as the Englishman, but perhaps with more real sincerity—"words." But, as a German, and full of her national earnestness, she answered quite simply,

"Feelings."

"So you all say, but what do you mean by feelings? Are they not things which you can excite one day and destroy the next, play with as long as they are amusing, and dismiss directly they are dangerous? Of course. And life is made up of such trifles. Pshaw! Pardon me, there is a spider on your dress."

Louise gave a little scream. She hated spiders.

"That is a feeling, I suppose. Now I take the nefarious insect between my finger and thumb and drop it on the ground and stamp upon it. Is the feeling gone?"

"Of course it is."

"*Sic transit gloria cordis*. Are you good at allegories?"

"Ah, Mr. Vaughan, you are getting beyond me. Do the ladies in England understand Latin? for I don't."

"Forgive me. You understand so much

that I fancied for the moment you understood everything."

This he said, like all else, half-mockingly, half-sadly, but Louise replied quite seriously—

"Well I *do* know a little Latin. But then we pronounce it so differently from you."

Then for a time they walked on in silence, a silence broken, however, by the distant music of the band, the nearer carol of the song-birds, the silvery laugh of children, and the hum of varied conversation. Gradually the party which they followed left the public gardens further and further behind, and began ascending the steep and picturesque hill on which stands the ruined arch that lends such a strange beauty to the scenery of Rolandseck. Great indeed was the labour in which the worthy Herr Bonngart and his yet worthier wife found themselves involved by the ascent. The one was fat, the other was lean, but both alike were woefully defective in the organs of respiration. And it was indeed cruel in the lady to choose that occasion of all others for the resuscitation of a conjugal tenderness which was well known to have slumbered

comfortably for many a year. None knew the day when Frau Bonngart had last availed herself of her husband's arm. Though an invalid, she was independent of all such help, at least from him. Great, then, was his surprise, not to say vexation, when, in the most toilsome part of the ascent, he felt a heavy weight pressing upon his weak and nerveless arm, saw four skinny fingers and a skinnier thumb intrude themselves between his coat-sleeve and body, and heard the harsh voice of his wife exclaim—

“Bonngart, you must really help me here.”

Had they been alone, there is reason to think that the miserable man would have broken out in flat rebellion. Fourteen stone is enough in all conscience for a man to be called upon to take up a mountain—even such a moderate specimen of the class as is the Berg at Rolandseck. And then suddenly to have another seven or eight stone forced upon your unwilling hands is almost too much for human endurance. And so the worthy Herr would doubtless have told his spouse, and at the same time have disengaged himself from her tender caress, had not the fear of the English-



man restrained him. He had a mortal horror of giving the enemy occasion to triumph over him, and so, manfully accepting his burden, he struggled, Excelsior-like, towards the ruins, and hid beneath the cloke of a sickly smile the wolf of discontent that was preying on the vitals of his happiness.

At last they reached the summit. There, above, was the ruined arch that told of a hapless love and a wasted life. There, at their feet, gleamed the silvery Rhine, enshrining in its glassy bosom the green islet on which Roland's love lived out the tedious years that stood between her and the death for which she longed. And, further on, the Drachenfels frowned down upon the river, and Königs-winter nestled at its foot, as rejoicing in its lordly protection.

"Is it not lovely?" exclaimed Louise.

"The ascent has been anything but lovely," growled her father, unceremoniously freeing himself from the arm of his spouse, and panting and puffing as only a stout Rheinländer can. "What a pity it is one can't have a view without climbing for it!"

"But surely you don't call *this* an ascent,

do you, papa?" asked his eldest daughter, a tall, thin lady, whose figure seemed specially adapted to the work of climbing.

"It doesn't matter what you *call* it," replied the old gentleman testily, "but it makes one very hot and tired."

"Now, Mr. Vaughan, do look at the nunnery at Nonnenwerth. How pretty it looks! Think of poor Roland building this tower, and living in solitude year after year only to get a peep at his lady-love as she went from her cell to the chapel. Of course you know the story?"

"Not exactly."

"Well, I'm not sure that I know it exactly, and I don't remember the lady's name, but you can find it all in Bädeler. At any rate, Roland was a knight, and he was betrothed to a certain lady, and then off he must needs go at once to the Holy Land, where he remained so long that every one thought he was dead. The lady waited for him year after year, but at last gave up all hope, declined every other offer, and became a nun, living in that nunnery which you see below. All the time, however, Roland was

not dead ; he was in prison, or otherwise detained in the East, and came back at last full of glory and renown. His first care was to seek his lady-love, and great indeed was the blow when the cruel fact became known to him that she was now a nun and lost to him for ever. So he built this tower, which commands a view of the island, and watched the nuns as they went to chapel, that he might thus catch a distant view of the beloved one. And can you talk of want of constancy after *that*, Mr. Vaughan ?”

“ A brilliant exception,” he answered, bitterly ; “ so brilliant and so rare that it is famous everywhere. Were constancy the rule, men would not make so much of a case like this.”

“ And do you really think constancy so uncommon ?”

“ It depends upon what you mean by constancy. The constancy which has everything to gain—which clings, limpet-like, to some rock of worldly position or wealth—is, and always has been, common enough ; but the constancy which involves self-sacrifice—the constancy which clings to the beloved one

when all beside fail him, and pours forth the heart's wealth as water to purchase him relief from suffering and from sorrow—where will you meet with this?"

He spoke earnestly, passionately, but in a moment the old cynical smile flitted across his face, and he added, "After all, the only real constancy is money in the funds. Property in hearts is very unsafe; you get such a magnificent dividend at one moment, and find yourself a beggar at the next."

"I don't quite understand you," said Louise, "you are too metaphorical for me; besides, I don't know exactly what the 'funds' are; but I believe you wrong us ladies very much by your views. I could die for any one I loved."

"Perhaps so, but you could not love fifty pounds a year, a shabby coat, and unlimited obloquy. So the Sybarite might have fought for his bed of roses so long as all the leaves were uncrumpled. But let one leaf get ruffled!"

So an hour passed, and the time came for coffee. Then they all returned to the hotel-garden, and seated themselves at a table

under the shade of a spreading tree. It is the sweetest moment in the day to the genuine Teuton; and in good truth there is somewhat as of nectar infused into the commonest potable when drunk in the pleasant shade, which the furtive sunlight chequers here and there, whilst the sky beyond is clear as an infant's brow, and the air is balmy as the breath of beauty.

"Do sit at the table like a Christian," said Louise, imploringly, to Vaughan, who had thrown himself with his usual *insouciance* on the grass.

"Anything else, Fräulein, I will do for you even to the half of my kingdom, but your benches and straight-backed chairs I abhor, detest, and utterly abjure."

"What bad language!" said Louise. "However, I suppose you must have your own way. But don't delude yourself into the belief that you look graceful on the grass."

She spoke in jest, and half thought, on the contrary, that that careless figure was not without a certain peculiar grace, as it lay half reclined at her feet, but an impartial eye would have seen at once that there was but

little elegance in either attitude or form. Only just escaping the charge of being short, and certainly obnoxious to that of being thick or square-built, Arthur Vaughan's figure was as plain as his countenance; not but what in the latter there was something which, to a discerning eye, even more than atoned for its irregularity. Two dark hazel eyes, set beneath expressive, intellectual brows, glittered sometimes so brightly with the rich light of vivid thought, and at other times beamed so softly with the tenderness of unuttered feeling, that you almost forgot to notice how dull the complexion, how ill-shaped the lower part of the face, how ugly, though expressive, the mouth. This last was, however, in a measure, concealed by a moustache, and redeemed by a set of white and regular teeth. The forehead, too, was unusually good, and spoke to the phrenologist of great powers as well of acquisition as of original thought. The hair, already slightly flecked with grey at the temples, confirmed the tale of suffering which the settled melancholy of his look suggested, and which the occasional bitterness of his expressions corroborated. But what was the

secret of the past life of Arthur Vaughan, neither Herr Bonngart nor his family knew. The Herr himself, a good, easy soul, believed in no other troubles than those which spring from a narrow exchequer or an impaired digestion. The Englishman seemed free from these; therefore, according to the easy logic of the small-souled man, the Englishman was happy. If he ever seemed otherwise—Gott! what could you expect from an Englishman? Were they not all full of crotchets and mag-gots?

Thus reasoned the worthy Hausvater, and in the main his wife agreed with him. But, as a woman, she could not but think occasionally that a secret lay upon the Englishman's life. He had come to them oddly, with only a letter of introduction (which told them little) from a merchant in London, whom they knew but slightly. He had himself given out that he wished to study German, and to some extent he had carried out his wish, but there was an indefiniteness in all his plans and purposes, and a settled reluctance to talk about his past life, which seemed at the least peculiar. That he was a gentleman by birth

and education was evident ; beyond this all was obscure. His profession—if any—his family, his abode, his age, all were unknown. Sometimes when bitter memories dwelt upon his brow and creased it into wrinkles, he looked five-and-thirty or even more. But at other times, when, in the glow of conversation, his clear musical voice rang out laughingly, and his eye sparkled merrily, and the whole face was transfigured with the singular beauty of expression which it then assumed, you might well have taken him for ten years younger.

And he looked young that day, as, coffee-cup in hand, he chatted pleasantly, now in English with Louise, and anon in execrable German with the others, enjoying with boyish zest the simple pleasures of a German afternoon. But when they turned to go home he said suddenly :

“ I think, if you will excuse me, I will stay here a little longer.”

“ Then you will miss the train.”

“ Ah, *Fräulein*, you forget there is another, and, if that fails, I can walk.”

“ But how very rude to desert us in this way !” said Louise pettishly.



"Pardon! Is it not you who desert me? How cruel!"

"Well, adieu. I know how obstinate you can be. It is lucky we have another escort."

"If you had not, nothing should have deprived me of the pleasure of escorting you," and Vaughan rose to his feet, and bowed with the old mocking smile upon his lips.

"I suppose he is in one of his 'moods,'" said Louise to her mother, when they got out of hearing.

"A very singular young man," quoth the Frau in return; "but, as the father says, all the English have their humours."

"I wonder what he means to do," continued Louise. "Has he any friends at Rolandseck?"

"How should I know?" answered her mother testily, "and how does it concern you? Young people should not be so curious."

Louise was used to this fashion of address from her mother, who was famous amongst even German matrons for the excellent order in which she kept her children, so she said no more at the time, but when in due course they

had reached Bonn, finished their supper and gone to bed without seeing any more of Mr. Vaughan, she renewed the subject with her sister, in whose room she slept :

“ I wonder why on earth Mr. Vaughan did not come back with us !”

“ Were you so anxious that he should ?” asked her sister maliciously.

“ Who ? I ! No, indeed !” replied Louise, with the easy hypocrisy of her sex ; “ but still it is strange, is it not, Theresa ?”

“ Nothing that *men* do is strange,” replied her sister grimly—a remark which lost none of its effect from the vindictive way in which at the same moment she extinguished the light.

## CHAPTER II.

### A RETROSPECT.

THERE was truth in the suspicion of Frau Bonngart that a cloud lay upon the Englishman's life. He was at this time a self-expatriated exile, seeking to forget in a foreign country the painful associations which haunted him in his own. And the better to avoid detection at the hands of any chance travelling acquaintance, he had assumed his mother's maiden name of Vaughan in place of his own.

Arthur Lovell was the only son of a Yorkshire baronet of ancient lineage and considerable property. The family had possessed their present estates from a time, "whereof" (as the lawyers, in their doubtful English, are wont to phrase it) "the memory of man runneth not to the contrary." And a stern,

sturdy race it was that had thus ruled the broad acres from time immemorial. Thoroughly English both in blood and sentiment, they had ever shown themselves possessed of something more than an Englishman's determination and tenacity of purpose. Their motto, borrowed from the Somersets, truly expressed their character. *Mutare vel timere sperno* stood chiselled on the stone portal of the ancestral mansion, and was engraved to the full as deeply in the hearts of its inhabitants. The squires of Grantholm were renowned in fireside legends for their unrelenting obstinacy. One in the Wars of the Roses had set fire with his own hand to his house, and perished in the flames rather than open the door to the victorious Yorkists. Another, in the reign of Charles the First, would doubtless have done the same to spite the hated Roundheads, had not a shot from an arquebuse deprived him of the opportunity. Nor since then had the family been less distinguished for unflinching obstinacy, although the comparative tameness of the times had necessitated its exhibition in a less ferocious manner. Arthur's great-grandfather had afforded a notable proof

that the old tenacity of purpose was by no means extinct in the family. This squire (the family was as yet untitled) had the misfortune to have in his eldest son a man as obstinate as himself, but of very different opinions. It was then a time of considerable intellectual ferment, and the son had during a foreign tour imbibed opinions which the father stigmatized as revolutionary. The consequence was no slight estrangement between the two. This culminated when the son, instead of marrying, as the family desired, a neighbouring heiress, was revolutionary enough to run off with a pretty, penniless Swiss girl, who was governess to his sister. With characteristic obstinacy the father insisted that the girl should be cast off, and doubtless treasured a hope that through neglect and poverty she might be driven to something which would justify a divorce. But, alas ! for his schemes, the son with equally characteristic obstinacy refused to listen to them even for a moment. Thereupon the old gentleman carried out an oft-expressed intention, and disinherited his rebellious son at once and for ever. What had become of the latter had not been

ascertained. All that had been known was that he had left England, and sworn never to return. Some conjectured that he had adopted his wife's country as his own, whilst there were not wanting others who asserted that he had in all probability gone to push his fortunes in the great Western colonies. How he had succeeded, and whether he had left descendants, were matters respecting which no information ever reached the family, and as it was in his father's power to alter the succession, it had never been necessary to set any legal inquiries on foot. The estates had passed to his younger brother, and through him to Arthur's father.

Arthur himself had begun life late. He had been at no public school, and when, at a rather more advanced age than usual, he entered at Christ Church, he was still in experience very young indeed. That he learnt much while at Oxford is certain, yet that which had been so learnt had been mostly of a kind to confirm him still more in what men called the strange ideas which his home life had engendered. He recoiled instinctively from the loose ethics of his young companions. A

sense that he was made for nobler ends than mere pleasure indwelt him most instantly. He had then, as ever afterwards, a craving for the pure, the beautiful, the good ; and this craving Oxford "wines," even when seasoned by the undergraduate variety of "Attic salt," had little power to satisfy. Neither did Arthur find the so-called "dons"—men whose pride in their own attainments was for the most part happily counterbalanced by the modesty of the attainments themselves—much better companions. It was a choice between the intercourse of men who knew they were not learned, and that of men who had not yet discovered that they were ignorant—and, in the opinion of the old Greek sage, the advantage does not rest with the latter.

Arthur himself had of course no pretension to be called a *savant*, but he never ceased to wonder at the sublime self-sufficiency of men who founded a claim to the title on a very moderate acquaintance with two dead languages and an almost utter ignorance of all other branches of knowledge.

Under these circumstances, Arthur clung more closely than ever to the two beings at

home who had already done the most to influence his character. These were his mother and his only sister. For his father, Sir Charles Lovell, a hard, unyielding man, who possessed his full share of the traditional qualities of the family, he had never had any other feeling than a kind of cold, filial regard, and a species of boyish admiration of his numerous masculine accomplishments. Anything more tender the stern character of Sir Charles had effectually precluded. But both his mother and sister Arthur loved passionately—far more so than is common with men.

Unhappily for his future, ere he had well finished his Oxford course, his mother died of typhus-fever caught in visiting a sick villager. His sister yet remained, and to her he clung with a doubly-intensified affection. At once beautiful and good, she became to him as an embodiment of his ideal; she was all in all to him. He seemed to do more than love her—there was a kind of adoration mingled with his affection. Alas! two years after her mother, she, too, fell ill and died.

For a while Arthur was fairly inconsolable. During the lifetime of his sister he had rather



avoided the society of ladies, as finding all their best qualities summed up in her. Now, however, with a kind of unnatural desperation he flung himself into their midst. He felt he could not live solitary and loveless. He must find sympathy and solace somewhere.

Then it was, when his heart was at its weakest and his experience still unfledged, that he fell in with one who was only too ready to take advantage of his defenceless state. He had gone on a visit to an old college friend—Lord Charles Granton—who was at that time quartered with his regiment at a garrison town on the East coast. There he met Louise Claxton. She was the daughter of a deceased naval officer, and lived in great retirement with her widowed mother. It was with difficulty that Arthur succeeded in obtaining an introduction. And, when thus much had been accomplished, he found her at first reserved and distant. The fact was that Miss Claxton was, even thus early, a finished *artiste*. She was always working with consummate skill to accomplish what she rightly deemed the *chef-d'œuvre* of life—a good match. With her keen insight into

character she saw at once how to treat Arthur's case. Little by little her reserve relaxed. Arthur was melancholy ; she must soothe him. He was poetic ; she must sympathize with him. He was rich ; she must marry him. And it must be owned that she proved herself the cleverest and most patient of tacticians. She seemed to enter into Arthur's inmost thoughts. She professed profound sympathy with all his woes and aspirations. Moreover, she was beautiful exceedingly, and that was always much with Arthur. What wonder, then, that he should have fancied himself in love with her, and rushed, with youthful recklessness, into an engagement ?

But now, in the more constant and confidential intercourse that exists between acknowledged lovers, "there fell as it had been scales" from Arthur's eyes. He saw that—unintentionally, as he, in his great charity, believed—he had been deceived. It may well have been that Miss Claxton, when once she had secured her prize, took little further trouble. It was enough for her to be recognized as the *fiancée* of the future baronet. She read Arthur's

nature sufficiently well to be sure that, do what she might, he would never break his word. In a point of honour he had all the family obstinacy. And so the disillusionising process was perhaps more rapid than it might otherwise have been. But, sooner or later, it must have taken place. For two natures more unsuited to each other, less really sympathetic, than those of Arthur, Lovell and Louise Claxton never came forth from the Unknown.

It is said that history has a tendency to reproduce itself, and the family history of the lords of Grantholm seems to bear out the assertion. Something very like what had already happened in the case of Arthur's revolutionary ancestor now happened in the case of Arthur himself. In his impetuosity he had got himself engaged without asking the consent of his father, and this alone was enough to render so exacting a relation not a little indignant. But the baronet had also an ineradicable objection to the match itself. The daughter of a half-pay lieutenant, of no family, and with no money, was, in his eyes, an utterly unsuitable bride for the eldest son

of such a house as that of the Lovells. Untaught by the experience that the family had already had of the uselessness of such commands, he imperiously commanded his son to break off the engagement.

By the time matters had reached this pass Arthur's eyes had been opened so far that he would not have been loth to carry out his father's wishes could he have done so without compromising his own honour or injuring the prospects of his *fiancée*. But this was obviously impossible; and, under these circumstances, he determined firmly, though respectfully, to decline compliance.

This obstinacy rendered Sir Charles furious, and there is little doubt that he would have put in force the family punishment provided for such cases—viz., unconditional disinheritance—had it been in his power. But it was not. The estates were now entailed and, without Arthur's own consent, he could not be deprived of the right to their reversion. What the enraged father could do he did: he withdrew every penny of the handsome allowance he had been in the habit of making his son, and swore that, until he complied with his

wishes, it should not be renewed. The result was, that Arthur would have been penniless but for a small sum which had been left to him, unconditionally, under the terms of his mother's settlement.

Such was the state of affairs when Arthur had had his last interview with Miss Claxton. He had told her frankly how matters stood, but had made no attempt to take advantage of his father's anger to recede from his engagement. And Miss Claxton was by no means the person to suggest such a change of programme. She knew that the estates were entailed, and she could afford to wait. It would, she agreed, be a most imprudent thing to marry upon Arthur's present income. And when the latter went on to say that, under these altered circumstances, it was impossible for him to remain in England, where he was so well known, and that he proposed living abroad, she only pouted just so long as a lover-like propriety seemed to require, and then gave her consent with a secret satisfaction that she would thus be relieved of one whom she did not love, and whose constant presence would have been no slight restraint. She

was clever enough, at the same time, to detect that this feeling was mutual. Before they parted, it was understood on both sides that, at the end of three years, the marriage should take place. By that time Miss Claxton hoped that the baronet would relent, but, if not, she deemed that it might be well to make certain of his successor.

Thus it had come to pass that, after two years' sojourn in France and Spain, Arthur Lovell had fixed his abode in the university town of Bonn, to learn German before he returned to England. As yet no change had taken place in his relations with his *fiancée* and his father. With the former he but rarely corresponded, with the latter never. And the bitter thought that his life was now, and seemed likely to continue, loveless and hopeless, rested ever like a dead weight upon his soul.

## CHAPTER III.

### EARLY HOURS.

**H**ERR BONNGART was a very regular man, and kept his household in the same order as himself. Punctually at half-past six every morning he awoke, and was ready for breakfast as punctually at half-past seven. And it was bad for the whole household if the Herr's breakfast was not ready for him. Such an event was one of the few tangible calamities in which the good man believed. He stormed, he fretted, he sulked, felt himself as unfortunate in his daughters as was King Lear in Goneril and Regan, and as unlucky in his handmaid as Job was in his friends. For the establishment possessed only one servant. Like all careful German lasses, the daughters were able to turn their hands to any household matter, and managed all domestic concerns with prudence and economy.

Great indeed was Arthur's astonishment at first to see these ladies—ladies in mind, in person and in manner—undertaking all the drudgery of the kitchen. Brought up as he had been in all the fastidious refinement of modern English life, he was for a time so shocked as to be in danger of losing his belief in the lady-like qualities of those who could so demean themselves. He was not then aware how, both from necessity and education, the German *Fräulein* combines extreme mental culture with the highest talent for domestic management and capacity for household work. But he soon grew reconciled to the discovery, and in time even admired, though in his fastidiousness he could not like, the conduct of a beautiful and clever girl like Louise, who could so cheerfully transform herself every morning into a maid-of-all-work, and undertake tasks from which an upper servant in England would have recoiled with superb contempt.

The day after the expedition to Rolandseck was an unlucky one. For once the sisters, tired with the toils of the preceding evening, overslept themselves; and the maid, who



would have done so habitually unless roused by them, revelled in the unwonted luxury of a morning snooze.

Almost indescribable was Herr Bonngart's annoyance and indignation when, emerging from his room at his usual hour, he found no sign of breakfast—not even the fire lighted in the kitchen—not a sign of life or industry about the house. For a moment the good man was paralyzed. Never in his experience had anything quite so awful happened before. Breakfast had on rare occasions been a little late, “but never aught like this.” It almost seemed as if there were to be no breakfast at all. He gasped for breath, which, when he had recovered it, he employed in muttering maledictions on the heads of his unworthy and neglectful children :

“To think that in my old age it should come to this!” he murmured between his clenched teeth. “But something must be done!”

Even in his old age, however, the Herr was a man of resource. His military experience (he had served during the French war) still stood him in good stead. Curbing his indignation for the moment, he seized a bundle of

faggots, threw them on the kitchen fire, set some lighted paper beneath them, placed a few logs on the top, and then looked round the kitchen for the kettle. Luckily it was at hand, and already filled with water. To place it on the now blazing fire was the work of a moment, and then, feeling sure that no more time would be wasted, the angry patriarch proceeded to indulge his wrath. He rushed upstairs with the swiftness of sixteen, and knocked thunder-knocks on the door of his daughters' room, whilst his quavering voice sent stinging rebukes through the key-hole. The sisters, thus rudely disturbed, leapt out of bed swiftly and noiselessly before they ventured upon a word of reply. Then, pretending to have been long since getting up, they tried to pacify their angry father with promises of speedy appearance.

"We shall be down directly," they cried in chorus.

"Down directly! you lazy, good-for-nothing, ungrateful girls! Down directly! I should hope so indeed!"

"Please don't be angry, papa—we were so tired."

"Tired! What business had you to be tired? *I* ought to be tired if any one. At my age to be treated in this way!"

To this the sisters answered nothing, but waited anxiously for him to withdraw. This he soon did, and then Louise fled stealthily upstairs, woke the still-slumbering Gretchen, and ordered her, on pain of the severest penalties, to go down stairs at once and prepare the breakfast. The maid-servant's toilette, never very elaborate, was soon completed, and she descended like a scape-goat into the desert below. Loud and angry were the master's tones when he beheld her, and the sisters, with their door half-open, could hear the storm as they hurried on their clothing. But they knew that poor Gretchen had, so to speak, broken its neck, and that it would now fall somewhat the lighter upon them.

Besides, an unexpected auxiliary was at hand. When a quarter of an hour later they were just preparing to descend, to their great relief they met the Englishman on the landing. It was so unusual with him to leave his room thus early that they could not restrain their astonishment.

"And why may not *I* get up early for once?" he asked innocently.

"Certainly you may, and our good angel must have prompted you to choose this morning."

"How so? The 'good angel' that has called me forth so early, was, I think, rather more noise than usual. I hope nothing is wrong?"

"Nothing very particular," answered Louise, "but we are shockingly late to-day, and papa is very angry about it."

"Late! Good heavens! What do you call early?"

"Hush," said Louise; for at that moment they entered the "Speise-zimmer," and encountered the wrathful gaze of Herr Bonngart. Luckily Gretchen had by this time supplied him with his breakfast, and he was to some slight extent mollified; but no small portion of anger remained, and was just about to burst on the head of his daughters, when he caught sight of Arthur behind them. Instantly his manner changed, and, with the usual but monotonous courtesy of a German, he asked him the invariable morning question, how he had slept.

"Very badly," replied Arthur, laughing.

"That was because you would stay behind us at Rolandseck," said Louise. "By-the-bye, how did you enjoy yourself after we left?"

"I should have enjoyed myself more if you had remained," answered Arthur.

Theresa, Louise's sister, looked a little surprised at this remark. She understood English though she could not speak it, and to her serious German mind such a remark almost amounted to a declaration. But Louise, more experienced in English ways, knew how easily such speeches roll off the tongue of the young islanders, and did not at the moment attach much importance to it.

The breakfast progressed very well, considering how great a commotion had attended its preparation, and Herr Bonngart gradually recovered his usual equanimity. But where all this time was his worthy wife? The fact is, that, unlike most German wives, who have neither time nor inclination to play the invalid, she fancied herself in very infirm health, and seldom rose before mid-day. It may be that she was not unwilling that the chief burden

of the house-keeping should be thrown upon her daughters, whilst they, for their part, were only too happy to have the kitchen to themselves during the eventful time in which the mid-day meal was preparing. The dinner hour was half-past twelve, by which time Arthur was generally as hungry as need be; for the light repast of coffee and a roll, which went by the name of breakfast, did more to whet than to satisfy his appetite. But the worthy Frau, in spite of her infirmities, was a woman of very decided character. With her husband she shared that idolatrous worship of the idol respectability which distinguishes the Teuton from the Celt or Latin. To be known as the pattern wife and the model mother—as the most devout of worshippers and the most charitable of donors—these were the main objects of Frau Bonngart's ambition. And certainly to a very considerable extent she was successful. Though but badly provided with money by her husband, she was much respected. The young looked up to her with a kind of admiration not unmixed with dread, the middle-aged asked her advice with deference, the old commended her for setting as

good an example as themselves. It is true that her temper was shrewish, and her manner repellent; but even these failings had their own value, inasmuch as they removed her yet further from the faintest breath of scandal. So the worthy woman went through life respected by all—not least, if report spoke truly, by her husband.

And yet she was a quaint enough object to look at. Thin black hair demurely smoothed on each side of her face, pale, cold black eyes, a nose vulturine rather than aquiline, a narrow mouth, armed with discoloured and ragged but still hungry-looking teeth, a long upper-lip, with more than the adumbration of a moustache upon it, and high cheek-bones—these were the most noticeable points in her appearance. She looked a born economist. There was calculation, if not “speculation,” in her eye. Finance was perhaps the passion of her life, and a kind of exchequer-wisdom her greatest talent. Of womanly softness and tenderness she had but little, and, being deficient in these qualities herself, she was apt to despise them in others. Her daughters feared rather than loved her, and her husband himself, if not, as

some asserted, absolutely afraid of her, yet usually gave way to her wishes for the sake of a quiet life. Well then might she be respected and envied amongst the matrons of Bonn.

That her household was regular, is a matter needing no assertion. Like Richelieu, she ruled her little kingdom from her bed. Everything went on like clock-work. The daughters took it in turn week by week to cook the dinner, and otherwise to be responsible for the conduct of domestic matters. After breakfast it was Arthur's custom to pick out a shady spot in the garden, and there to recline, book in hand, until the time came for him to receive his German lesson at the hands of the fair Louise. He followed his usual routine on this occasion, and it was not long before his teacher joined him.

"You are free early to-day," he said.

"Yes," replied the lady, seating herself on a garden chair, and taking out her work. "You know it is my sister's week."

"I cannot tell you how I admire your energy. You are always employed. You put our English ladies quite to the blush."

"Are they so very idle, then?"



"Well, not perhaps exactly idle, but they sit in the drawing-room all day, and do embroidery, or play the piano, or read the last novel, when you would be doing something much more useful."

"I envy them in only one respect. They must have so much more time to talk."

"Self-betrayer!" exclaimed Arthur. "And is talking the chief pleasure of life?"

"Well, it is a very great one. And who is fonder of it than you?"

"Yes, you are right. I *am* very fond of it. It saves one so much thinking."


"How absurd! As if one could talk without thinking!"

"Of course *you* don't; but I do it often. You know there is thinking and thinking. I had an aunt who used to knit when she dreaded rheumatism in her fingers. It was a little trouble, but it kept off the pain."

"I do not see the application."

"Why, that one sometimes weaves a web with the tongue to relieve the pressure on the brain and heart."

"So you have a heart?" said the young lady, laughingly.



“Unluckily, yes !”

“Why unluckily, if it is a fair question ?”

“Perhaps I answered hastily. Certainly I see no misfortune in having such a heart as is now-a-days in fashion. A wonderful piece of civilized machinery, constructed with a kind of patent double-action, warranted to expand indefinitely at the approach of gold, and to contract into something quite intangible at the mere name of poverty. Such a heart spoils no one’s digestion. But suppose the rare exception that you have a heart that throbs painfully with every emotion—so sensitive, that a word, a look, a gesture, which most men would not even notice, stabs it with thrilling pain, or makes it drunk with rapture—can you not imagine how unlucky it must be to own a thing like this ?”

“But if it brings ‘rapture ?’”

“‘Ay, there’s the rub.’ Judging, however, by my own experience, I should say better be devoid of sensibility than be capable of these extremes of joy and pain. For to one scruple of joy you can add pain *ad lib.* ; and the draught must be taken at least hourly.”

"How can you take such gloomy views of life on a morning like this? Do you know, now, I don't see why people should suffer so much as you make out. There is always something to be enjoyed."

"So there is always something pretty to see; but if you suffer from colour-blindness, you don't derive much benefit. Surely, *Fräulein*, you, as a German lady, believe, with other philosophers, that it is not what is outside, but what is inside, that is the important matter?"

"I pretend to no philosophy; but it seems to me a pity that, when people have health, money, youth, talents, everything to make them happy, they should still give way to melancholy fancies."

This was rather a home-thrust, and, intimate as Louise was with their guest, she had never ventured so far before. She speedily repented having done so now.

"Ah!" he said, sarcastically, "the world is indebted to you for a new recipe. Mix health, money, youth, and talent in equal proportions, and the result is — happiness, duly bottled and corked, and provided, I sup-

pose, with the Bonngart label — no other genuine! Allow me to congratulate you on being so easily satisfied.”

“You are very sarcastic—but I think, also, a little unjust. Surely the things I have mentioned tend to make people happy.”

“How well you speak English! But ‘tend to make,’ and ‘make,’ have often an ocean of difference between them. However, you are already happy in having so happy an idea of happiness. Three, at least, of the four requisites you possess already. Let us hope the fourth may not be far distant. Would that I had twenty thousand pounds to place at your disposal!”

At this moment Frau Bonngart made her first appearance for the day. Her cold, dull eye rested with a cunning satisfaction upon the two figures. She drew near. The Englishman rose, bowed, and wished her “good-morning.” He offered her a seat. She took it very graciously.

“We were just quarrelling over happiness,” he said, with intended ambiguity, and in miserable German.

“Quarrelling over happiness! What an

odd thing to do ! I do not quite understand you, Herr Forn."

"I mean we were disputing what constituted happiness. Perhaps you can help us to a definition?"

Definitions were hardly Frau Bonngart's *forte*—in fact, she had but the vaguest idea of the meaning of the word ; but she replied—

"To do your duty, and to be respected for doing it, that is my idea of happiness."

"Excellent, madam ! What more can any one want ? I have often thought what exquisite pleasure the moon must have in revolving on her own axis, and, if to this you superadd her gratification when Saturn says to Venus, 'How well Luna does her work !' the force of felicity can no further go !"

Frau Bonngart stared, astonished. He had said this in English, but something in the tone of his voice told her that he was speaking satirically. However, she was no friend to unpractical discussions, so she said almost in the words of the old Latin proverb—

"Well, every one has his own opinion, and if we can't be happy, at least we can be contented."

"And can you, then, be contented not to be happy?"

"I am always contented to be as I am."

It was a bold assertion, and one perhaps scarcely warranted by facts. But it was a masterpiece of conversational strategy, and secured Frau Bonngart an easy victory. The Englishman could not say, what perhaps he thought, that he despised such contentment as hers. He could only smile, bow, and reply--

"I am rejoiced to hear it."

"When are you going to have your lesson?" asked Frau Bonngart.

"*Moi, je suis toujours prêt,*" answered Vaughan.

"*Moi aussi,*" added Louise.

Acting upon this unanimity, they re-entered the house, and were soon hard at work in the little study.

## CHAPTER IV.

### “STOLE AWAY.”

THE next day the Englishman disappeared rather suddenly. He had declined to join Frau Bonngart and her daughters in their afternoon excursion, alleging fatigue as his excuse, and, on their return, he was nowhere to be found. It is true, he had endeavoured to convey some communication to Gretchen, the maid, but his knowledge of German was so imperfect, and her stupidity so great, that he appeared to have failed utterly in making himself understood. All that a long and rigid cross-examination could extract from the feeble-minded girl was that “Herr Forn” had gone out soon after the rest of the family had left, that he had returned almost immediately in a *droschky*, had muttered something about being in a great

hurry, and then, after having hastily crammed his effects into his portmanteau, had driven off at once, as she believed, to the railway-station. That was all she knew. No, she did not think herself stupid. Thought it very odd that foreigners couldn't speak proper German. It was all very well for the "gracious master" to say she ought to have been quicker, but what was a poor girl to do? She couldn't stop the Englishman by main force, neither could she understand his horrid language. But she was always being blamed for whatever happened.

And overcome by the remembrance of her wrongs, the injured Gretchen burst into tears.

It was such an obvious sin against economy to have the maid-of-all-work in tears, and therefore helpless, that Herr Bonngart at once relaxed the severity of his frown, and even condescended to call her a good girl, and to say that no doubt she had done her best. But his rage and indignation, though thus prudently for the moment suppressed, were none the less genuine. He vented most of it on his daughters, though it was hard to say what they had done to deserve such treat-



ment. The first thing that pacified him at all was the discovery that the Englishman had left a portion of his property behind him.

The next morning some of the mystery was cleared up. A letter addressed to the "well-born" Herr Bonngart was handed to him at breakfast-time. It was from Arthur, and ran thus :—

"Hotel d'Angleterre, Mainz, Thursday.

"MY DEAR HERR BONNGART,

"I LEFT a message with your servant which will have accounted in some measure for my sudden disappearance. The fact is, I was unexpectedly summoned here on important business, and had no time to wait for your return from your walk, as, had I done so, I should have missed the only suitable train. I hope to be with you again in a few days, but will in any case write. Meanwhile, pray make my apologies to Frau Bonngart and the other members of your family for the abruptness of my departure, and believe me to remain

"Very sincerely yours,

"ARTHUR VAUGHAN."

It took some time for the worthy Herr to read even this short letter, for Arthur's German handwriting was yet worse than his English, and Herr Bonngart's sight was not so good as it had once been. But at last he spelt it all out, and, having satisfied his own curiosity, was in no hurry to satisfy that of the others.

"So you have heard from Mr. Vaughan, papa," exclaimed Louise.

"I never said so," observed papa, sententially.

"No, but I saw the handwriting. I am sure it is from him."

"It is very rude to scrutinize other people's letters."

"For my part," said Theresa, "I wonder Louise troubles herself to inquire. It can be nothing to her what Mr. Vaughan may do."

"But he went away so oddly," said Louise, blushing.

"Are not all his countrymen odd?" retorted Theresa.

"Well, it is very natural that one should like to know what is become of him. But if

papa doesn't wish to tell us, of course I don't want to inquire further."

"I never said I did not wish to tell you," observed her father, even more sententiously than before.

"Please do, then!" cried Louise, eagerly.

"You can read the letter for yourself," said Herr Bonngart, rather more graciously.

Louise did so, whilst Theresa, feeling herself bound by her expressed opinion, was constrained to conceal her impatience. As to Theodore, the brother, he was a student at the University, and busied himself but little about family affairs.

"So he is at Mainz," said Louise, at last, putting down the letter; "I wonder what his business is."

"I daresay we had better not enquire too closely," said her father, maliciously.

"How well the letter is written!" continued Louise, not heeding his remark.

"That means how well you have taught him," said Theresa. "Come, I will criticise it." And, delighted with this excuse for looking at it, she took it in hand and read it carefully.

"At least six mistakes in this short note," she exclaimed, triumphantly—"and such bad ones! 'Sie' for 'Ihnen,' and 'mir' for 'mich.' One would think he were a Berliner. Just you look at it, Theodore; I daresay you will find out some more."

But Theodore, a wild young gentleman, whose tastes, although he was a student, were rather social than literary, took no interest in correcting bad German.

"I daresay it's all right," he said. "What does it matter? You understand what he means, I suppose."

"I think you are very hard upon him," said Louise to her sister. "He has been studying German only two months."

"And I say that, with such a teacher as he has had, he ought to have made more progress. But perhaps the lessons have not been devoted exclusively to German."

This was a cruel thrust, but Louise parried it. "O, no! He has been adding to my stock of English also."

"And what do you talk about?" asked Theresa, who was both jealous and spiteful.

"What should they talk about?" broke in

Theodore, roughly. "As if an Engländer *could* talk of anything but horses and dogs, and beef and pudding. I hate the whole lot of them."

With this comprehensive expression of ill-will Theodore rose and strutted out of the room. As, by profession at least, a student, he had a sitting-room of his own, where he spent most of his time when at home. There he studied various scientific problems, chief and most frequent among them being how best to fill a given cubic space with tobacco smoke in the shortest time. This had on several occasions received at least an approximate solution through the unwearied efforts of himself and his compeers, but nothing short of the most perfect success would satisfy such ardent minds.

## CHAPTER V.

“TOUT EST PERDU FORS L'HONNEUR.”

IT was on no unimportant business that Arthur had been called to Mainz. Lord Charles Granton, his old college friend, had been laid up there by an accident when on his way to Bonn, and had summoned Arthur to a business conference at his bedside. It was true that there had been no such pressing haste as the short telegram—“Come without delay”—which Arthur had received had seemed to indicate. On the contrary, Lord Charles professed to be much astonished at the celerity of his friend's movements.

“You put me in mind of Swift's lines on Lord Peterborough,” exclaimed the young nobleman, after a cordial greeting—

“So wonderful your expedition,  
When one has not the least suspicion,  
You're with one like an apparition !”

"But you telegraphed, my dear fellow, so I made sure that not a moment was to be lost."

"I only did that because it's less bother than writing. I dote on the telegraph. It's such a nice compendious way of expressing one's ideas."

"But, at least, you needn't have put the words, 'without delay,' if there's no hurry."

"I didn't put them," answered Lord Charles, languidly; "it was the *maitre d'hôtel* who worded the message. I only gave him your address, and mentioned the two words, 'telegraph' and 'come.' He is responsible for the rest. It's a clear case of that confounded *trop de zèle* which used to provoke Talleyrand so. But I really hope you were not put out much by such a peremptory summons."

"Not at all; and I am glad not to have lost a day in coming to see such an old friend. But I had to start without taking leave of my worthy Germans, and I doubt if Gretchen, the maid, will deliver my message without spilling the contents."

"In fact, they'll think you've 'bolted.' A capital idea! We must look in the papers

to-morrow. You are sure to be there, either under the heading of 'A clever swindler' or 'Mysterious disappearance of an Englishman.'"

"Then your accident should be there also, headed in true sensational style—'A nobleman's *faux pas*.' By the way, you have not yet told me how it happened."

"Very simply. I was stepping out of the train last night in the dark, expecting that, at a place like Mainz, they would be sufficiently advanced in civilization to have a platform. But blessed is he who expects nothing. My foot was disappointed in its expectation, and revenged itself by giving my ankle a wrench, which, the doctor tells me, it will not recover for some days."

"A very disagreeable adventure."

"It would have been much more so, had you not so promptly taken compassion on me. Now my imprisonment will go smoothly enough—that is, if you can stay here."

"Certainly; I am quite free and shall enjoy being with you."

"I wish you *were* free," said Lord Charles, meaningly; "but I suppose you are as determined as ever."



"Quite. *Noblesse oblige*. And at the end of this year I am bound to marry."

"I am glad there is so long a respite. Something may happen yet to prevent such a misfortune."

"Yes—death."

"Or—love."

"On my side that is quite impossible," said Arthur, gloomily.

"Everything is impossible before it happens," answered Lord Charles, gaily—"afterwards, nothing."

"French paradoxes will not overcome facts."

"What facts?"

"Why, first, that I am now, as you know, so disappointed and disgusted with life, that I am incapable of forming any new attachment; and, secondly, that, if a thing so incredible did ever happen, it would in no wise relieve me of my present obligations."

"Perhaps not; but I fancy it might whet your inventive powers not a little. You might then condescend to try at least to find an honourable mode of escape."

"I cannot conceive any other than Miss

Claxton's voluntarily relinquishing her claim upon me."

"I am sure she would now accept a compromise. That is my chief business with you."

"I could not propose anything of the sort. And, Granton, though you are my most intimate friend, and my only confidant with respect to this affair, you must allow me to say that I think you go a little too far in making such a suggestion."

"As proud and obstinate as ever!" exclaimed Lord Charles, laughing. "Know, then, thou over-punctilious man, that *I* did not suggest it; though I daresay I often shall in future."

"Who did then, if not you?"

"You can easily guess, I fancy — your father. I met him in town just before I started, and he began inquiring, as usual, for you — though, as usual, he added a particular request that I should on no account tell you that he had done so. Not being so scrupulous as you, I decline to comply with such a request, and give you, as you see, the benefit of the information. Indeed, I am not at all sure that Sir Charles was over-anxious that I

should carry out this part of his instructions. At any rate, he exacted no pledge on my part. He then went on to say that he knew how intimate I was with you, and was pleased to add—(he evidently does not deal with my tradesmen)—that he considered me a very desirable acquaintance. Thereupon I ventured, most cautiously and nervously, to put in a word about your engagement.”

“And what did he say?”

“I must candidly confess he waxed very wroth. It was just opposite my club, and all the fellows asked me the next day what we had been quarrelling about. So you may imagine he was rather demonstrative. However, emboldened by my new reputation as a ‘desirable acquaintance,’ I ventured to fight your battle for you a little. I said that I was sure you were at heart a most dutiful son, and that it was only your keen sense of honour which prevented you from complying with his wishes.

“‘Then you do not think he cares for that adventuress?’ he asked. (Forgive me for repeating his exact words.)

“‘Not a bit. He would be only too glad to be free.’”

"You had no right to say that, Granton," interrupted Arthur. "I hardly know how you have come to believe it. I have never told you so, and yet you always seem to take it for granted."

"I only expressed an opinion," answered Lord Charles, dryly—"one, however, which you are not always very ready to contradict. Well, right or wrong, this opinion seemed to please your father very much.

"‘Then,’ he said, trying still to be very stern, but betraying his satisfaction by that curious little twinkle of the eye you know—‘then the matter may after all be arranged.’

"‘How?’ I asked.

"‘Why, if, as you say, Arthur does not care for the girl, (I confess I thought he did), or she for him, she can surely be bought off. The only thing is, *I* cannot be the first to move in the matter. I have sworn that I will have nothing to do with him until he expresses his willingness to recede from an engagement into which he entered without my permission, and which is in all respects so utterly unsuitable for him. But let him make an advance to me, and he will not find me draw

back. I would pay any sum to set him free. And the girl can, no doubt, entrap some one else, and thus get two fortunes instead of one. Add to this that I have a young lady in my eye who would just suit Arthur.' ”

“ Who is she ? ” asked Vaughan, with some curiosity.

“ Well,” answered Lord Charles, to whom it occurred too late that this part of the story might with advantage have been omitted, “ I am not quite sure that I ought to mention the name.”

“ It can do no harm. Come, out with it.”

Thus adjured, Lord Charles said, smiling—

“ I believe it was Lady Laura Lysons. But of course that part of the programme need not be carried out.”

“ Why, she is forty, without being either fat or fair,” exclaimed Arthur, grimly. “ *Solvuntur tabulæ risu*. I had better remain in my present position.”

“ You misunderstand me,” answered Lord Charles, diplomatically. “ Your father mentioned this quite *en passant*. It is not at all an integral part of his scheme. What he wants is to see you a free man again—and so do I.”

"What more did he say?" asked Arthur.

"He wound up by throwing out some mysterious hints that I, as your most intimate friend, might be of great service in the matter. I was going abroad. I should doubtless see you. I might of my own accord suggest the idea of a compromise, and propose that you should write to your father on the subject. I was not to mention his name. In that respect I have certainly exceeded my official instructions, but I take a large view of the powers of a plenipotentiary."

"So it seems, *mon cher*. And what do you advise?"

"Take your father's hint—*cela va sans dire*. There is no doubt a compromise would be accepted."

"And equally certain that I, as a man of honour, could not propose it. What! say to the woman whom I have promised to make my wife: 'Here, take this bag of money instead.' I must lose all sense of self-respect before I can consent to *that*."

"Let me do it, then, for you."

"A mere legal quibble, Granton. It would be my doing all the same. *Qui facit per*

*alium facit per se.* No. I would gladly be reconciled to my father, but not at such a price. All is lost but honour—let me at least keep that.”

Arthur spoke with such feeling that Granton judged it best to discontinue the subject, and did not again refer to it, until, after several days of inactivity, he was preparing to resume his tour. Finding Arthur still inflexible, he came to the conclusion that any further intervention on his part would be for the present hopeless. In this conviction he took leave of his friend.

“Are you bound for a long tour, Granton?” asked Arthur.

“It will last a month or two. I mean to do South Germany, the Tyrol, and North Italy, thoroughly. I shall probably return *viâ* Bonn, and, in that case, will not fail to look you up. How long do you remain there?”

“I do not think I shall move until I go back to England. I am very comfortable—have a charming German teacher, and like the place itself as well as any other.”

"*Au revoir*, then. May you be in a better mind when we meet next."

"And you, with unsprained ankles ! Adieu !"

Thus the friends parted, and, if one gleam of hope for his friend's future illumined Lord Charles' meditations as he lounged in the luxurious railway carriage, it was contained in the words, "I have a charming German teacher." Of course the lady herself was out of the question as a *partie*, but it was a point gained that Arthur should show so much interest in any member of the fair sex ; at least the plenipotentiary, in the utter absence of all other good auguries, determined to regard this as favourable.



## CHAPTER VI.

### FROM MAINZ TO BONN.

THE next day Arthur set out on his return to Bonn. He had some days before received an answer to the letter he had addressed to Herr Bonngart. This answer was written by Louise at her father's request, (for the latter was too cunning to risk his reputation as an educated man by committing his thoughts to paper,) and expressed the regret of the whole family at his enforced departure and their hope of his speedy return. There was added, probably by Louise herself, a sly and jocose allusion to the pressing nature of his business. This letter Arthur had duly answered, stating when they might expect him, but giving no satisfaction with respect to the reasons that had rendered his journey necessary. He mentioned, however, that he had

protracted his stay longer than he had originally intended, in order to enjoy the society of an old friend.

He had determined to go from Mainz to Bonn by steamer. The weather was fine, and the voyage manageable in one day down stream. It was, to a mind like Arthur's, no slight privilege to glide once more between those vine-clad hills, to scan those castled crags, to watch the many windings of that glorious stream, and to drink in with eyes and ears deep draughts of that sensuous beauty which earth holds out to her poetic children. Not that with mere sensuous beauty he could ever be content. Form and colour could make his cheek flush and his heart throb, as a vivid sense of the exquisite perfection of external loveliness rushed in upon his soul. But they could not satisfy. In his most rapturous moments he felt that, after all, they were but the material reflections of great spiritual realities lying beyond. And it was for these his soul yearned, with that deep uncontrollable yearning which tends to wear away by no slow degrees the physical life of so many poetic natures. He knew, intuitively, instinc-

tively, that all the beauty of nature was, after all, but the type and shadow of human passions and feelings—the steep mountains of ambition, the valleys of contentment, the deserts of unsatisfied desire, the rough crags of bitterness and animosity, the commingled waters of friendship—all crowned and consummated and dominated by the pure illimitable ether of a vast and eternal Love. It was after this last he sighed—sighed deeply and constantly; but life seemed to turn a deaf ear to all his longing, and to say roughly and rudely, “Not for thee! Not for thee!”

He was sitting in the coffee-room of the Hôtel d’Angleterre, at Mainz—a dreary, uncomfortable room, furnished in accordance with foreign notions respecting English taste, and supplied with waiters who spoke the English language with the most charming latitude of expression. Opposite him was a stout gentleman, evidently Britannic, possibly aldermanic, with a still stouter personage, his wife, and a good-natured-looking young lady, his daughter.

“What time does the boat go?” asked the

fat gentleman, with his mouth full of bread and ham.

A waiter flew to answer the question, but his acquaintance with English did not always extend to understanding it. He only spoke it, and that too on a system peculiar to himself.

"What time does the *Dampfschiff* go?" repeated the stout gentleman, using the German word and making it sound very like an improper expression. Two ladies at the next table looked grave.

"Did you hear, Arabella?" said one to the other, "he called it the d——d ship. Hadn't we better change our table?"

This time the waiter understood better. "Ze best boat goes, sir, at half nine," he replied.

"Then we'd better go by that, hadn't we, my dear?" said the stout gentleman, glaring rather fiercely at his wife, though he had addressed her by that term of endearment, the constant use of which by the English always amuses the Germans so vastly.

"You know best, Sir Peter," answered his

better half. "For my part I care very little when I go, or where I go to. I never was so fagged and worn-out in my life."

"Well, you're on your way home now—that ought to console you a little," retorted the other.

"The sooner we get there the better, say I. Have you finished your breakfast, Polly? for, if so, you had better go upstairs and see that your things are ready, since we are to be hurried off in this way. Without seeing the cathedral, too!"

"The cathedral, indeed! A trumpery red-sandstone abomination—a perfect disgrace to the archbishop! Besides, I thought you wanted to get home as soon as possible."

Any further altercation was cut short by the waiter bringing the bill. Keenly did Sir Peter scrutinize it, but at first he could detect no error. This always annoyed him. He was one of those who hold it for an axiom that everyone is always trying to cheat you, and it is of course disagreeable to find the process of chicanery eluding your investigation. At last his eye brightened.

"How is this?" he exclaimed, triumphantly,

"you have charged me for a cup of tea I never had."

"When, sir?"

"Yesterday evening. I shan't pay for it; so take the bill away, and get it altered."

The waiter retreated into the den where the bills were made up, but soon returned.

"If you please, sir, you had a cup of coffee last night."

"So I had, but that's not tea."

"The price is the same, sir."

"Never mind; I'm not going to be charged for tea when I never had any. Charge me for coffee, if you like."

The waiter knew the whims and crotchets of Englishmen, and made the required alteration. Sir Peter then paid the bill, and waited for his change.

"How is this?" he exclaimed, again, when the money was laid before him. "You have only allowed six thalers, thirty groschen for a pound. At the present rate of exchange it is at least six, thirty-two."

"If you please, sir, we never allow more. It is not the custom in hotels."

"Of course not!" cried Sir Peter, sarcasti-

cally—"of course not; you know better than that, eh? But I know better also, and I tell you I insist upon having my right change."

"Perhaps, sir, you will pay in Prussian money and change the English gold somewhere else."

Sir Peter grew almost purple in the face.

"A mere dodge," he muttered, with suppressed rage. "The rascals know I've no Prussian money, and I suppose this cursed English isn't a legal tender. Here, take what you want," he added aloud, to the waiter; "but don't think you've taken me in. I understand your dodges."

"Pardon, sir, I do not understand you."

"You understand me well enough, you—" But Sir Peter stopped short of an epithet, not being quite sure how a German would take it. Then, turning to Arthur, he said, in no measured tones:

"What a pack of rogues they all are at these hotels!"

It was not for want of travel or experience that Arthur still retained, in spite of the occasional bitterness of his talk, what worldly people called an absurdly good opinion

of human nature. He was generally disposed to take a charitable view, and, having found his own bill very moderate, and the hotel tolerably comfortable, he felt himself quite unable to sympathize in his neighbour's complaints.

"Do you know," he said at last, "I fancied the charges here rather moderate."

"O, yes, moderate enough. I don't complain of them. But that transparent dodge about the sovereigns."

"What dodge?"

"Why, I mean not giving me enough for them. They knew very well I had no Prussian money, and must take what they chose to give me."

"But really, I fancy," replied Arthur, "you are labouring under a slight mistake. I have been in many hotels, and the recognised change is six thalers, thirty groschen for a pound, and five thalers, twelve groschen for a napoleon."

"Is it?" said the other, more temperately. "Well, I'm glad to hear it—very glad to hear it, I may say;" and whilst he spoke, the gentleman's face kept steadily falling, in inverse




ratio to the increasing cheerfulness of his language.

"There, Sir Peter," said his wife, "why make such a fuss about nothing?"

"Pray, my dear, be quiet," returned the other, *sotto voce*. He could bear being corrected by a stranger, but not being rebuked by his wife.

At this moment the door opened and "Polly" re-appeared, ready equipped for the journey. Arthur bestowed a glance upon her as she entered, and was agreeably surprised at her *tout-ensemble*. No one who saw Sir Peter Martin and his worthy lady would have credited them with so pretty a daughter. She was very young—apparently not more than sixteen—with a *petite* figure, small hands and feet, roguish hazel eyes with dark eyelashes, a nose ever so little *retroussé*, bright red lips, half pouting and half smiling, with good teeth behind them, and dark brown hair plainly but gracefully arranged to set off the contour of her face. There was perhaps the slightest suspicion of *embonpoint*—a somewhat *reubenesque*—which one hardly expects in a young English beauty; but this



was so obviously due to invariable good-nature and perfect health, that it was very easily condoned. Her dress, too, set her off to the best advantage. Though plain, it was yet far more tasteful than is that of the travelling English in general, and the little coquettish hat in particular, with its white bird's wing at the side, round which was wound a blue gauze veil, gave an irresistible piquancy to her appearance. Every gentleman in the room spared a moment from his breakfast to look at her, and one enthusiastic Frenchman muttered something, of which only two words, "*ravissante*" and "*mees*," reached Arthur.

"Everything is ready, mamma," said the young lady, stooping down to whisper to the portly Lady Martin.

"Then we had better have the luggage brought down."

Sir Peter beckoned the waiter and gave the order. Through the open door Arthur saw trunks, bonnet-boxes, bags, and all the paraphernalia and *impedimenta* which are the curse of high civilization when on the move. Soon all was ready, the hotel truck duly

loaded, and the passengers on their way to the *Dampfschiff*.

It was one of Sir Peter's "off" days with his wife, and on these occasions he was always "on" with the rest of the world. It may have been this, or it may have been some other reason, which made him keep close to Arthur and express his gratification at finding that they were to be fellow-passengers.

"Do you go far to-day?" asked Arthur, putting the invariable traveller's question.

"Pretty well, pretty well," replied Sir Peter, already beginning to breathe rather hard in consequence of the pace at which they were walking. "Pretty well: we sleep at Bonn to-night. My daughter is going to school there."

"At Bonn?" exclaimed Arthur. "That's where I am staying."

"Oh, indeed! Do you mean you are living there?"

"Yes; for a time at least."

Sir Peter looked at his new companion suspiciously. He was a city man, and had city notions respecting the "soundness" and "safeness" of those who fixed upon either

Boulogne or Bonn as a residence. And with him, as with most middle-class Englishmen, the eighth and deadliest sin was insolvency.

"H'm!" he said, at last. "May I ask what you find so attractive at Bonn?"

"Well, it is very pretty, but that was not the reason that induced me to choose it."

"H'm!" said Sir Peter still more suspiciously. "Perhaps you had friends there?"

"Not a soul. I went there quite as a stranger."

"H'm!" grunted Sir Peter, more discontentedly still. It was only too evident to him that he was walking side by side with a fugitive bankrupt. His virtuous bosom was beginning to be stirred to indignation and pious horror, when Arthur added, telling as much of the truth as he thought necessary with a casual acquaintance:

"The fact is, I was very anxious to learn German, and so I determined to spend six months or a year in Germany. The great question was, where to go. Personally I prefer South Germany, the climate is so much pleasanter; but then the language is said not

to be so pure. At last Messrs. Moggridge and Gudgeon, with whom I once had some dealings, recommended me to go to Bonn, and gave me a letter of introduction to a family there, with whom young Moggridge once stayed for the same purpose. *Viola tout !*"

"And so you know Moggridge and Gudgeon, do you?" cried Sir Peter. "Why old Moggridge is one of my most intimate friends. Sir, I esteem myself fortunate to have made your acquaintance. I am Sir Peter Martin, also perhaps not quite unknown in the city," he added, with a proudly-humble *eironeia*.

"Ah ! Sir Peter Martin !" exclaimed Arthur with polite hypocrisy. "The name sounds very familiar to me" (he might have added "in connection with blacking"). "Mine, alas ! is not so famous—Arthur Vaughan."

The old gentleman paused a moment as if he were thinking how he might return Arthur's compliments, but he soon relinquished the task. Peter Martin might or might not be a distinguished name, but it was quite certain that that of Arthur Vaughan had not yet emerged from obscurity—at least in the city.

“Well, Mr. Vaughan,” repeated Sir Peter, condescendingly, “I am very pleased to have made your acquaintance. Any friend of Mr. Moggridge’s will always be welcomed by me. But here we are at the boat. My dear,” he continued, overtaking his wife, and tugging roughly at her shawl, “my dear, this is Mr. Vaughan, a great friend of Mr. Moggridge’s. Mr. Vaughan, Lady Martin. That is my daughter Polly,” added the alderman, pointing to the young lady, whom he evidently considered too young for a formal introduction,—“a good girl, but giddy.”

Miss Polly blushed at this manner of introduction. She cast down her eyes, and when she again ventured to raise them, she found those of Arthur still fixed upon her. The would-be demureness of her demeanour, coupled with the irresistibly roguish expression of her look, and taken in conjunction with the character her father had just given her, amused Arthur so much that he could not forbear smiling. The young lady did the same, and a sympathetic understanding was at once established between them. Sir Peter was already handing his amiable lady into the

steam-boat, and Arthur lost no time in doing the same by the daughter.

They were soon on the after-deck, the luggage duly registered, and the steam-boat in full career. Arthur, who was an experienced traveller, had secured them comfortable seats, and at the same time had managed to establish himself as comfortably by the side of the young lady. Sir Peter, who prided himself on being a practical man, had gone on a voyage of discovery below, possibly, as he gave out, to criticise the engines, but more probably, as his wife asserted, to study the preparations for dinner. Lady Martin's attention was engrossed by a panorama of the Rhine, which she studied so intently as to lose the greater part of the actual scenery it was meant to portray. There was nothing to interfere with a *tête-à-tête* conversation on the part of the young people.

Arthur was delighted at the prospect. It was not because the young lady was pretty and engaging, though this was much to one who, like Arthur, was so keenly sensitive to the attractions of form and colour. It was that with her beauty she united a simplicity

and cordiality which won upon him more and more every moment. The first instant that their eyes met, he had known by an intuition that they would need no interpreter between them. And so it proved. Though the young lady was at first a little shy, this soon wore off, and they ere long laughed and talked as if they had known each other for years. There was something essentially youthful in Arthur's character. Though his hair might be faded at the temples, and the brow sometimes contracted beneath the burden of remembered sorrows, he could in congenial society cast all care, all memory aside, and revel in the blessed present, like the morning-lark, which sings none the less merrily because the night has been dark and stormy. And so it was to-day. He grew every instant younger. As he sat by the side of the charming girl and watched her sparkling eyes and sunny face lit up with the holy fire of youthful enthusiasm, his own eyes kindled with the light of genius, his heart throbbed quicker and fuller in the pulsations of a sympathetic excitement, and a glow of fervour crept over his pale cheek, like the morning sun on a snow



peak. At first they talked of the wondrous river over which they were gliding—of the stories and legends attaching to every bend and crag.

“It is a perfect world of romance—of fairy-land,” said the girl. “I can almost fancy I see the robber-knights. But no! There is a railway. Fancy a railway by the Rhine.”

“Or our own steam-boat. How astonished those knights would be to see either the one or the other. I confess I do not like this combination of the picturesque and the practical. Scenery is very well in one way, and railways are good in another, but they do not go well together.”

“And yet it must be so,” said the girl, with an unconscious philosophy, and sighing as she spoke.

“Yes, it must. ‘Must’ is, after all, the foot-line with which our utmost aspirations are measured. And what poetry for savage grandeur is like the poetry of necessity? How sublime it makes the Greek tragedians——”

Arthur stopped, remembering in tolerably good time how little Sir Peter Martin’s daughter was likely to know of Greek poetry

or prose. But the young lady smiled and said :

“ Why did you stop ? Of course I know nothing of Greek, but I like to be told something ; and sometimes, you know, when one does not quite understand what is said, one seems to feel its general meaning.”

Arthur looked her full in the face with delight. Here was the sympathy which, even when ignorant, is more intelligent than coarse, unfeeling knowledge. Just then Lady Martin turned round and said :

“ Polly !”

“ What a very unpoetical name,” thought Arthur.

“ Polly !”

“ Yes, mamma.”

“ Have you seen my pocket-handkerchief ?”

“ No, mamma. Is it lost ?”

“ That’s just what I want to know,” returned her mother sharply. “ If I knew it were lost I shouldn’t ask you about it.”

“ I think you must be sitting on it, mamma.”

“ I sitting on it ! What nonsense ! Well, never mind. Here’s your papa coming—and

who's that odd creature he's got with him ? I declare he's always picking up somebody or other."

The figure that Sir Peter was gradually leading towards them was indeed an odd one. It was that of a tall, bony man, very thinly clad in a black cloth coat that had once been glossy, and still possessed a thread-bare shiningness ; a black waistcoat, cut very low, and revealing an almost boundless expanse of what should have been snow-white linen, but was really crumpled yellow calico ; trousers of a large pattern, but small size, secured, not without reason, to the feet by straps, for they were perceptibly too short for the gentleman's legs ; and varnished boots with the varnish in most parts omitted. A very loose turned-down collar, insufficiently secured by a greasy black neck-tie, and a portentously tall, rusty hat, completed his equipments. Large, long hands hung down far below his sleeves, and were entirely guiltless of gloves, though the weather had in some measure compensated for this deficiency by tanning them a rich brownish-yellow, so that at first sight you might fancy he wore dog-skin gauntlets. But the man's

face and walk were even more extraordinary than his dress. A thin, hungry-looking visage, scantily furnished on either side with impoverished and unhealthy-looking sandy whiskers—hair of the same colour sticking out obtrusively under his hat—no moustache, but a kind of goat's beard hanging from the chin—deep-set grey eyes, very small but bright, and with a perpetual twinkle of cunning—hollow lantern-jaws—a wide mouth, furnished with a few undisciplined yellow teeth, the survivors of a whole army destroyed by the Capua of sugar-candy—these were his most noticeable features. His gait was something between a slouch and an amble. He rolled very much from side to side, and seemed to have the greatest difficulty in going straight to an object—which thing may have been an allegory—but withal there was an air of self-assertion, if not downright impudence, in his look, which forbade you to think that any humility was to be inferred from his style of locomotion.

Such was the gentleman whom Sir Peter led up to his lady, and introduced as—

“Mr. Elijah Borrodale, of New York.” At

the same time whispering to her: "American Consul at Würzburg, my dear."

Mr. Borrodale was an eminently polite man, especially to ladies. During the ceremony of introduction he stood with his hat off, which gave Lady Martin an opportunity of seeing that it had no lining. Nor when this ceremony was finished did he resume his covering.

His style of conversation was eminently terse and *staccato*.

"Darned shabby stream this, ma'am."

"Well, do you know, I think it very pretty," replied Lady Martin, announcing the beauty of the Rhine as an entirely new and startling discovery.

"Seen the Hudson, ma'am?" continued Mr. Borrodale, not condescending to waste more words on the Rhine. "That's somethin' like a river. And our boats, ma'am? Why we'd take fifty of these here cockle-shells in one of our river-steamers. I guess we han't much to learn in thet way."

This was spoken by Mr. Borrodale through his nose, with much emphasis and very little punctuation. Having thus discharged

his duty for the moment to Columbia, by giving her a meed of praise, he addressed his attention to practical matters.

"Air we a wide distance from Neuwied, sir?"

"I really don't know," answered Sir Peter.

"Because, if we air, I've a notion I'll drink some. What'll the ladies take?"

"Thank you—nothing at all," said Lady Martin, nervously.

"Is thet your engaging darter, ma'am?" continued the American, whose inquiring mind was now occupied with "Polly."

"Yes, that is Miss Martin."

"I congratulate yew, ma'am, thet I dew. And I will even go so wide as tew confess that the fair daughters of Columbia air run pretty hansum hard by the lovely belles of Albion."

This last speech approached so near to a sentiment, that Mr. Borrodale was again reminded of his "drink."

"I guess we'll be pretty wide off Neuwied yet, so I'll do my liquor. Thet young man a relation of yours, ma'am?" he added, pointing to Arthur.

"No ; a travelling companion," answered Lady Martin.

"Jest so—a *compagnon de voyage*, as the French say."

"Going maybe to Cologne, sir ?"

"No, only to Bonn," answered Arthur, shortly.

"To Bonn. Then maybe you'll meet a young chap there named Lessing. He's studying at the University. If yew dew, tell him I sent him my blessing. Thankee !"

This comprehensive but indefinite expression of gratitude seemed to give Mr. Borrodale an opportunity of taking his departure. He bowed to the ladies, nodded to the gentlemen, put on his hat jauntily, and slouched away, spitting profusely as he went. Lady Martin watched him to a safe distance, and then said—

"What an extraordinary man !"

"Yes, my dear, extraordinarily clever."

"I don't mean that—I mean his manner is so odd."

"That may be, my dear. He's a self-made man like myself, but I do not call him impolite. How anxious he was to show you every

attention, standing, as he did, with his hat off the whole time he was speaking with you, and offering to fetch you something to drink."

Lady Martin was a little mollified by these reminiscences.

"I daresay," she said, "his intentions were very good. But what impertinent questions he put!"

"That's their way, my dear," answered Sir Peter; "it's their way even before they get made consuls, and afterwards, of course, they can do anything."

"What place did you say he was consul at?"

"Würzburg"—Sir Peter pronounced it "Wordsberg."

"And where's Wordsberg?"

"I don't know exactly, but somewhere lower down, more in South Germany; in Bavaria, or Saxony, or somewhere thereabouts," answered Sir Peter, whose notions of geography were of the vaguest kind.

"Well, I can't say I like the Americans," said Lady Martin, who was an embodiment of British prejudices.

As to Sir Peter he was, or fancied himself, rather an admirer of American institutions,



but it was in theory only. He felt disinclined at any rate to discuss them at the moment, and sought therefore to turn the conversation.

"It must be nearly time for the *table-d'hôte*."

Even as he spoke, a small boy appeared on deck ringing the most diminutive and feeblest of bells, which was meant as a signal to the guests that the meal was ready. Sir Peter and his party made their way below, where they found themselves placed opposite each other, Sir Peter and his wife being on one side, and his daughter and Arthur on the other. Next to Miss Martin, on the further side, was Mr. Borrodale.

The table was spread simply but neatly, as is usually the case on board these steam-boats. A snow-white cloth invited the eye to rest upon it, and was plentifully relieved by knives and forks and bottles and glasses, whilst here and there a vase of flowers diversified its aspect. The company that sat down was as motley as the bottles, one of which stood opposite each guest. There were inhabitants of almost every European country: Russians, Poles, Germans of course from all

parts of the Vaterland, French, a solitary Spaniard, two or three Italians, and a party of Cubans, besides the inevitable English and Americans. Mr. Borrodale had discovered an acquaintance on board—a congenial spirit from his own country—but unfortunately the *Oberkellner* had placed the congenial spirit at a most awkward distance from him, and Mr. Borrodale was compelled to exert his powerful lungs to the utmost to make himself heard.

“*Donnerwetter!*” he cried, with a sufficiently good accent, for he had been long enough in Germany to pick up and pronounce accurately all the German equivalents for the words most frequent in his American vocabulary, “*Hol’ mich der Teufel, warum bringen Sie mir kein Salz?*”

The first clause was so simply expletive that it had better remain in the obscurity of the original. The second asked the question: “Why don’t you bring me the salt?”

The waiter hurried to him with the required condiment, and bowed as he placed it before him.

“What a mean, cringing set of lickspittle

rascals these German waiters are!" observed the consul in a high key to his distant friend. "But how can yew expect it different in a land like this? I'd like to give them one sniff of the air of Freedom, eh?"

"Why the —— don't they make a clean bolt for Californy?" replied the other, a gentleman from the Far-West, who was a whole prairie more profuse in his use of expletives than the fashionable consul from New York.

"Because they han't no sperret. Thet's why, me boy. Yer health, and may the proud Bird of the West never lose a feather from the wing of Freedom!"

This sentiment was duly honoured in bumpers of sparkling Moselle.

"Yours is, indeed, a fine country," said Sir Peter timidly to the consul.

"I guess, sir, yew ain't far wrong in that 'ere remark," rejoined Mr. Borrodale, with lofty self-complacency. "It's Freedom, sir, Freedom which has made us what we air, and will make us yet greater. Confound that villain of a waiter, he's taken me plate. Bring it back, yew rascal!"

The "rascal" thus apostrophised by the admirer of "Freedum" soon brought back the missing article.

"I suppose you've very good waiters in the States, Mr. Borrodale?"

"Neegurs, sir, neegurs mostly, and immigrants. A man with any sense of the sacred privileges of liberty will seldom so demean himself."

"And do the negroes make good waiters?"

"Yes, sir, if yew cuss 'em pretty rough, not otherwise. Somehow a neegur don't think as you're in earnest even over your dinner unless you keep the cusses flying pretty steady. But with management they'll do so, sir—they'll do."

"O, I see," said Sir Peter; "but with ladies that must be rather awkward, now, if the waiters require such constant attention of this sort."

"Sir, the man is a villain who does not wait upon a lady instanter," replied the polite consul. "I'd shoot him on the spot meself rather than thet such a slur should be cast on the fair fame of the freest land in all creation."

"Would you really?" said Sir Peter,

shrinking a little closer towards Lady Martin.

“Sir,” continued Mr. Borrodale, “I don’t carry a ‘six-shooter’ here, partly because there ain’t so much occasion to use it amongst these poor down-trodden wretches as there is amongst your equals ; partly because, sir, I am now the representative of my country, and I must sacrifice meself, and me own feelins, and me own predilections, for her sake. But, sir, in days gone by I’ve made the name of Borrodale respected, sir. Han’t I, Mr. Jackson ? You’ve heerd tell about me ?”

“Shot his two men in a public dining-room,” answered laconically the gentleman thus appealed to. “One on ’em shot through the heart—in consekens was unable to make a dying speech and confession—t’other said, if ever there was a villain on earth it was Borrodale.”

Mr. Borrodale seemed much gratified by this succinct account of his achievements and character. He smiled blandly—the hero sate confest—*verus deus patuit*. As to Sir Peter, he was shocked, whilst his wife looked aghast.

“And what had they done ?” asked Sir Peter at last, with some hesitation.

“Done!” repeated the Far-Wester—“done! Why, they’d assailed his reputation in the columns of the ‘New York Snapping Turtle,’ like a couple of dirty cowards as they were. But the consul was a match for them—thet he was.”

And Mr. Jackson’s eyes twinkled with merriment at the reminiscence.

Sir Peter, with his insular peculiarities, was more and more shocked, but his curiosity led him to ask another question.

“But was it not rather awkward for you, Mr. Borrodale? In England such matters are so difficult to explain away to the satisfaction of a jury.”

“Like enough,” answered the hero; “but yew’ll permit me, sir, to make one observation on the subject, and thet is, thet, with all respect to yewr opinion, Britain has got a deal to learn from us in such matters. With yew it’s all red tape; with yew it’s always the law and the letter. Now with us it’s different. There ain’t no beating about the bush. Law’s very well in its way, but arter all, the law was made for man, not man for the law. Yew darn’t shoot a man in a free country without

a reason, but I had a reason, and it's public opinion, not the law, which decides whether the reason is a sufficient one. I guess I've made that clear."

"Certainly, certainly," answered Sir Peter, who would not for worlds have contradicted so truculent an individual.

"Since thet time, sir," continued Mr. Borrodale complacently, "I've been mostly allowed to have me own opinions."

"Naturally," remarked Sir Peter.

"And, sir, I've maintained those opinions, and I will maintain them. No-one shall a-sert thet I'm wrong without me having a word to say to him. Thet's what I call Freedum, sir—the right of every man, however humble, to have an opinion, and to maintain it. Now I fancy thet's pretty stiff to do in yewr country, sir."

"Well we certainly don't defend our opinions quite so vigorously," said Sir Peter.

"*Martyrum sanguis, semen ecclesiæ*," interposed Arthur. "But truth seems best disseminated by shedding the blood of her opponens."

Mr. Borrodale fixed his sharp grey eyes on

the speaker. He could not understand the Latin, but he half-fancied the English was meant to be sarcastic. He began to regret he had parted with his "six-shooter."

"Young man," he said, "I ain't sartin sure I understand your meaning, but I guess I understand what the trewth is, and that pretty muchly."

"What is truth?" asked Arthur, repeating Pilate's question, but, unlike Pilate, pausing for a reply.

"Trewth," answered the American, "is what is trew, and what is trew is the trewth. I know what the trewth is, and when necessary I fight for it."

"I am afraid I do not quite follow your explanation," returned Arthur, "lucid and complete though it undoubtedly is."

Again the American bent his keen eyes on the speaker, with a half-puzzled, half-angry expression.

"I dessay not, sir. I dessay yew dew nct understand or follow me. The Bird of Freedom must soar, sir, sometimes where the Lion cannot follow."

"Does she never get tired of this perpetual



soaring? How she must enjoy resting for a moment upon mother earth!"

"Sir, the Bird of Freedom cannot rest, cannot grovel——"

"And never moults, I suppose," interrupted Arthur, laughing, for Mr. Borrodale's conceit and blood-thirstiness had exhausted his patience. The American fixed him for the third time with his eye, but seemed again undecided how to regard his speech. Meanwhile Arthur resumed his conversation with Mary, as he had already mentally named her—Polly being altogether repugnant to his sense of verbal beauty.

"How do you like this *table-d'hôte* system?" he had asked.

"O, very much indeed," replied the young lady enthusiastically.

"It's what we have every day in America," broke in Mr. Borrodale. "Don't you have it in England?"

"Never, I believe."

"Wal, I'll be darned!" ejaculated the consul; and, though he committed himself to no more definite expression, his opinion of the old country was not difficult to gather.

"Ah," exclaimed a young lady of the "gushing" order, who sat near them, and had been waiting for an opportunity of gliding into the conversation—"ah, it is *so* delightful to meet people of all nations, and languages, and creeds."

"Pardon me," asked the American, with cameleopard-like politeness, "but how do you tell a person's creed at a *table-d'hôte*?"

The young lady was nonplused. Arthur came to the rescue.

"Might we not say," he observed, "that a Roman Catholic bolts everything, an Episcopalian takes a few of the best dishes haughtily, a Dissenter hacks and hews his own *compote* defiantly—and so on?"

"And a Unitarian, sir?" asked Mr. Borrodale impressively.

"Rejects two-thirds of the repast altogether."

"Sir, I am a Unitarian," remarked the American, still more impressively, "and unless I greatly mistake, my friend over there is one also."

"No," replied Mr. Jackson, "just now I

go in for Mormonism. It lies in my line, you know."

"Wal, sir, and how would you tell a Mormon at a *table-d'hôte*?" asked Mr. Borrodale.

"I should offend your friend," answered Arthur, smiling, "if I replied, as I fear I may have already offended you."

"There yew're wrong, sir. Touch us in politics, and maybe we're tender, but religion is quite another pair of boots. And I'd like to know how yew'd tell a Mormon at an hotel dinner."

"Well, I should expect to see him help himself to other people's portions, especially their better ones."

The grim features of Mr. Borrodale relaxed into a smile. Mr. Jackson's intellect hardly enabled him to comprehend any allusion, however evident, so he grunted acquiescence, and continued bolting his food. By this time the dinner was nearly over, and it was not long before Arthur had the satisfaction of escorting Miss Martin again on deck, and resuming his place by her side. There the time flew rapidly by in conversation, and in

---

the enjoyment of the scenery, until the peak of the Drachenfels rushed into the field of vision, and warned them that the end of their journey was at hand.

## CHAPTER VII.

### GERMAN HUMOUR.

IT was still daylight when Sir Peter and his party reached Bonn. A crowd of curious and idle spectators had gathered as usual to watch the arrival of the boat. It was just the time of year when, as Mr. Borrodale had poetically observed, "human nature is on the wing." Crowds of travellers came and left by every steamer. There was always something to see at the little wooden landing-place. The student of men and manners never lacked opportunities of pursuing his investigations. There was the good-natured landlord of the "Hotel Rheineck," making his own neck somewhat wry in his attempts to secure a good view of the steamer from a side-window of the hostelry. There were expectant relatives and friends waiting for the boat to dis-

charge its cargo of humanity before they discharged their own freight of affection. There were noisy polyglot "touts," eager to earn a few groschen by carrying bags and parcels. There were omnibus and droschky drivers, intent on filling their respective conveyances. And over and above all these legitimate attendants on the scene, was a motley crowd of idlers and "loafers." Gaily dressed English and American ladies stopped a few moments to enjoy the spectacle of disembarkation. A knot of students, with light puce-coloured caps, and ribbons over their waistcoats, leant against the rails, smoking and laughing. Fat, heavy, beer-drinking shopkeepers, leaving their business to their wives, were here to enjoy an hour's delightful gossip. Some cavalry soldiers, in light-blue tunics, looked on for a minute superciliously. And mixed up with all these, and asserting for the nonce an equality with them, was that indescribable fringe and rough edge of humanity, which lives no one knows how or where, but which comes out, snake-like, to bask in the sun in summer, and in winter creeps into a barn or ditch to die.

"Can you recommend me an hotel in Bonn?" asked Sir Peter of Arthur.

"I hardly know. There is the 'Silver Moon,' where they give you a good dinner, bad rooms, plenty of noise, and an excellent opportunity of parting with your money. Then there is the 'Hôtel-Impérial,' commanding a magnificent view, empty for eight months in the year, and too full during the other four. Most of the English go there. Everyone speaks the language, and you generally meet an English bishop on the stairs, and run against an earl in the passage."

"I think that will suit us, my dear," observed Sir Peter, turning to his wife.

On this point there was perfect agreement between the pair. Sir Peter gave his wife his arm and led her on shore. Arthur followed with the young lady, did what little was needed in the way of interpreting, and, having seen them safely into a carriage, bade them adieu, and made his own way back to Herr Bonngart's abode.

All there was expectation. The worthy Herr himself had delayed his departure to his club in order to welcome the returning guest.

Frau Bonngart was arrayed in fearful and mysterious finery in honour of the occasion. Louise also had not neglected the opportunity to set off her many graces. Theresa alone and Theodore slighted the occasion. The former shut herself with a sort of negative spitefulness in her room, whilst the latter thought the opportunity a good one for paying a visit to one of the *Kneipen*, or beerhouses, where birds of his feather were wont to congregate.

"We are very pleased to welcome you back again," said Frau Bonngart.

"Very," echoed her husband.

"We have missed you so much," added Louise—and then blushed.

"Well, I hope you were not frightened at my leaving you so suddenly," said Arthur. "I tried to explain how matters stood to Gretchen, but either my German or hers was so bad that I doubt whether I succeeded over well. But I wrote as soon as I could."

"We were not at all uneasy," answered Herr Bonngart, with stately hypocrisy. "We guessed at once that some important business had called you away, and that you would soon return."



Herr Bonngart uttered this without moving a muscle more than was necessary for the articulation of the words. It was evident that his service in France had taught him more things than the art of war.

"And how did you enjoy your stay at Mainz?" asked Louise, betraying a little curiosity to know the nature of his business there.

"Pretty well. The place, as you know, is prettily situated at the confluence of the Maine and Rhine, but I can't say that I admired it much. However, I must just unpack some of my things, and then I'll tell you all my adventures at supper-time."

Supper-time soon came. Louise, whose week it was, spread a long and tolerably white cloth over the dining-room table, and placed thereon some veal cutlets, potatoes, salad, bread and butter, and tea. This was the ordinary evening meal. Sometimes the veal cutlets were exchanged for pork, and on Fridays eggs alone graced the board, but otherwise the uniformity of the evening meal was complete. Even Arthur, who thought little of such things, grew weary at last of the inevitable veal and

pork—unwholesome viands as he had been taught to consider them. But there was no help for this, as for many other things.

All sat down to supper, with the exception of Theodore. He was not uncommonly absent at this time. In fact, his University work seemed principally to be done in the evening—at least it was then he generally found it essential to be from home.


All were very gracious to the Englishman, but Louise in particular. Whilst evidently endeavouring to conceal her feelings, she as evidently hung upon every word he spoke, and showed by the sparkle in her eye how much she rejoiced in his return, and how keenly she enjoyed his conversation. The fact was, that absence had worked its usual effect. Till the separation came she had not known the nature of her feeling towards the young Englishman. Now she could conceal it from herself no longer. She had felt his departure as a blow, his absence as a privation, and now she was conscious that his presence was to her as precious sunlight. It was at once a humiliating and a pleasurable discovery. Pleasant, because all love, however

difficult its outward phases may be, is yet in itself delightful. "To love" is, after all, the air to which "to be loved" is the accompaniment. And it is something to have the melody, even if you must do without the harmony. All the time Arthur was away she had thought of little else but him. In all her day-dreams his figure had woven itself into the soul-tissue of her imagination. She had not meant to do so. She was a beauty, and had some of the caprices and a little of the self-conceit of that favoured race. It was repugnant to her pride thus to think of any one of whose affection for herself she had had no proof. But so it was in this case. Do what she would, this one overmastering figure forced itself in upon her mental vision, and, somehow, though she wished not to dwell upon it, yet the dwelling upon it was sweet and fragrant. She struggled long—long if you reckon not by days and weeks, but by exertion and endurance—but the all-conquering feeling was too powerful for her. She gave way at last. She fought no longer against such hopeless odds. Nay, with her own hands she bound herself submissively to the blind godlet's chariot.

And there, when Arthur returned, was she, tied hand and foot with the cords of a true and tenacious affection.

As to Arthur, he had not the dimmest conception of the state of affairs. He had left Louise his pleasant, beautiful teacher, and he expected to find her unchanged. He knew not that the subtle chemistry of love had, during his absence, been changing, modifying, precipitating her mental and moral constitution. He was not aware of the magic influence of timely absence upon the tender heart—how the imagination straightway sets itself to work to draw a picture, nobler and more lovable than any human original, and gives it the name of the absent one—how, in short, “all things are possible” in absence “to them that believe” with the belief of a dawning love. And Arthur, too, was unusually humble-minded. Though conscious of talent, he was to the full as conscious of the personal defects of face and figure under which he laboured. He fancied no one would be likely to fall in love with him, and he certainly had no idea that he should fall in love with any one. He admired Louise with a true artistic

admiration, as being almost perfect in her external loveliness, and even at this moment he was mentally comparing her with Mary Martin, much to the disadvantage of the latter, as far as mere beauty was concerned—for Louise was indeed lovely. In the very fairest prime of youth, in those golden years between twenty and twenty-five, when every moment is precious as an elixir-drop from the chalice of perfected life, she seemed a very queen of beauty. She might have commanded the homage of princes, and Arthur did not marvel when men told him she had declined this wealthy and that noble suitor, as if keeping herself in reserve for a yet higher destiny. Never once did it occur to his mind that she could ever become fond of *him*—that she should wish to throw away the pearl of her queenly beauty on an unfortunate like himself. Neither would the girl herself have exactly desired and determined so to do. But love works strange marvels, and is a most exacting tyrant. She was no longer her own mistress, she had been hurried into a whirlpool whence there was no escape. At first she had thought little of Arthur. His undistinguished appear-



ance, the apparent absence of rank or great wealth, had caused her to take a very moderate view of his worth and merits. But she had fallen ere long a victim to his mental gifts. She had furnished another example of the many who can resist all else but mental fascination, but who succumb, without intending it, to the keen, sheer force of a stronger nature working daily upon their own. This is of all others the influence to which a woman is most subject; by nature weak, and ever seeking unconsciously for something stronger on which to stay herself, she is apt to lean upon any prop which may be near her so long, so hard, and so steadily, that, before she herself is aware of it, the prop has become a necessity of her existence. So it was with Louise. Day by day for two months she had been thrown into constant intercourse with Arthur; she had unconsciously studied his character, and discovered its many beauties; she had relied often and often upon his keen mental insight, his greater experience, his firm and unflinching determination. She had been drawn closer to him also by the mystery attaching to his past life, and by the evident traces of

suffering which yet hung about his being. Pity is akin to love—at least, when, as in this case, the pity is not itself allied to contempt, but is based upon a dim yet real appreciation of the sorrows of another. Add to this that their studies had thrown them much together, and none can wonder that a tender feeling should have grown up on the side of Louise. Alas! that he, who was at once its cause and its object, should have been so utterly unconscious of the fact!

“Where is Theodore?” asked Herr Bonngart at supper time—for the worthy Hausvater was for once at home.

“He has gone to see one of his friends,” answered the Frau, who always took her son’s part. “Something about some lectures, I fancy.”

As a matter of fact Theodore was at that moment helping to swell the chorus of a student-song in an upper room near the market-place, in company with some twenty other students more or less under the influence of Lager beer. But it is well for mothers that they do not always know exactly what their precious sons are doing.

The supper-party, however, got on very well without Theodore. He may have been, as his name implied, the "gift of God," but, if so, it was *gift* more in the German than in the English sense of the word. In fact, he had a somewhat depressing effect upon a family assemblage. No one was more merry out of doors, and no one more moody at home. He vouchsafed but little notice to his sisters, and still less to Arthur, who, however, was only too glad to be neglected. As to Herr Bonngart, he was in unusually good spirits, and told some anecdotes—mostly very stale—with unwonted force and animation. The conversation turned on the stupidity of the Bauern, or peasants.

"You know, I suppose, the old story about the Bauer, who went to a tailor's?" asked Herr Bonngart, who was glad of the opportunity to let off on the Englishman some of his well-worn anecdotes.

"No, indeed," answered Arthur.

"Well," said the Herr, "I don't know whether it's true or not; but it will give you a very good idea of the rustic Rheinlanders. A Bauer once went to a tailor in Bonn and



took him some cloth wherewith to have a coat made. The tailor promised to make it at once. Sunday, however, after Sunday went by, and still no sign of the finished coat appeared. At last the Bauer got indignant : ‘ Make me my coat,’ he said, ‘ or give me back my cloth.’ The tailor, thus adjured, promised that the garment should be ready by the next Sunday.

“ The Sunday came, and with it came the Bauer, looking quite disreputable in the old coat he had been compelled to wear so long. ‘ Well ?’ he asked, with pregnant interrogativeness.

“ ‘ Very bad news,’ said the Schneider. ‘ Of whom did you buy your cloth ? I never saw three such bad yards of stuff !’

“ ‘ I bought it of Herr Wolf,’ answered the Bauer, ‘ and he said it was splendid cloth ; what has happened to it ?’

“ Now the tailor was a needy man and had been compelled, by the exigencies of trade, to part with the cloth to an angry creditor. However, he put a bold face on the matter.

“ ‘ Why, it was good for nothing,’ he said :

‘directly I put it in water it shrunk, and shrunk, and shrunk until there was nothing of it left. You should really speak to the gentleman who sold it you.’

“The Bauer opened to their fullest extent his great sleepy eyes. This was, indeed, news to him, and news of a disagreeable kind. There was nothing to be done but to rush off to the nefarious seller of the cloth. In half-an-hour he came back foaming with rage.

“‘Herr Wolf,’ he cried, ‘says that the cloth was excellent. Why, it shrinks only three yards in the whole piece of eighty yards!’

“‘Ah! that explains it all, my friend,’ answered the tailor, calmly. ‘Herr Wolf must have sold you these very three yards. You must choose another part next time.’

“The Bauer went away sad, but satisfied.”

“Ah!” said Frau Bonngart, “that puts one in mind of the other story of the Bauer going to Köln. That, you must know, Mr. Forn, was in the days before the steam-boats. A Bauer was walking one day to Köln along the side of the river when he was overtaken by the tow-boat, which, at that time, conveyed pas-

sengers thither. The boat was drawn by men on shore, or sometimes by a horse. 'What's the fare to Köln?' cried the Bauer, who was lazy and footsore.

"'Ten groschen,' answered the man in command.

"'Too much,' replied the Bauer; 'I can't afford that.'

"'Well, I'll tell you what I'll do,' replied the other, who was a man of humour: 'if you like to put your shoulder to the rope, I don't mind taking you for half-price.'

"It is said that the Bauer caught at the bargain."

Arthur smiled at the stories, but he could not help being struck at, what seemed to him, the childish simplicity of German humour.

"What are you thinking of?" asked Louise suddenly.

"I was thinking if *you* had not also a story to tell us," he answered.

"Not of the same sort," she said. "I hate Jews, and my stories are generally against them."

"Do tell us one."

"Well, I will tell you one I heard to-day.

The only pity is that, unlike my others, it is rather in their favour instead of against them.

“A clergyman and a Jew were travelling together. The clergyman, wishing to make fun of the Jew, said to him, ‘Do you know, I had a strange dream last night. I dreamt I was admitted into heaven and, as I went along the corridors, I heard a fearful noise and commotion proceeding from one of the rooms. Turning to St. Peter, who was good enough to conduct me, I asked—

“ ‘What in the world is the meaning of all that noise?’ ”

“ ‘Oh, that’s the Jews’ quarter : it’s impossible to keep them quiet.’ ”

“There was a laugh in the carriage when the clergyman said this. But the Jew very calmly replied :

“ ‘It is really a most strange coincidence, but I had a very similar dream last night. I also fancied St. Peter was leading me about and showing me the sights of the upper world. All at once I came to a region which surprised me by its deathlike stillness.

“ ‘What is the meaning of this?’ I asked.

“ “ Oh,” replied St. Peter, looking grave, “ this is the clergymen’s quarter.”

“ “ But why so still ?” I enquired.

“ “ Because, up to the present time, no clergyman has ever succeeded in getting here !” ”

“ And now,” said Louise, having finished her anecdote—“ now, Mr. Vaughan, it is your turn.”

“ Pardon me,” replied Arthur, “ there is *Fräulein* Theresa who has not yet told us one.”

“ I never tell them,” answered Theresa, snappishly ; “ and, as to Louise’s story, I think it positively profane.”

Louise took no notice of this slap, but repeated her request to Arthur.

“ Well, really,” said Arthur, “ I am a bad hand at a story. I think you must excuse me. However, now I think of it, I did see a little anecdote in a paper at Mainz which rather amused me, and may, perhaps, amuse you. It is very short and out of a German paper, so you have no right to grumble at it.

“ The Duc de St. Germain, one of the old *noblesse*, went to call on Baron Rothschild

on important business. He was duly ushered into the Baron's presence, but the latter was busy writing, and seemed unconscious of the presence of his visitor. At last, however, he turned round and said, 'Pray take a chair.'

"The Duc, who was little accustomed to be so treated, replied, with *hauteur*—

"'M. le Baron, you are probably not aware that I am the Duc de St. Germain.'

"'Take *two*, then,' replied Rothschild, without turning his head."

A succession of such anecdotes, all marked to Arthur's mind by a strong family likeness, whiled away the time after supper until "the clock struck the hour for retiring," which in Herr Bonngart's household was ten at latest. Long before this time, his wife withdrew; in fact, she favoured the household with but little of her presence during the day, although her influence permeated in all directions. Thus the task of driving the family to bed devolved upon Herr Bonngart, who performed it with an heroic steadfastness and persistency of purpose which deserved the highest praise. It did one's heart good to see him growing gradually more and more restless as the hour

approached, until, as the clock struck the fatal decade, he started up and conveyed, as plainly as looks and gestures could speak, his sense of the absolute necessity for a general move bedwards. His daughters were, on the whole, submissive, and, besides, having to rise so early, they were not very desirous of sitting up late. As to Arthur, he was generally, if not very tired, at least sufficiently *ennuyé* to be glad to get to his own room, where he sometimes sat up half the night. Theodore, too, always managed to slink in just before ten, so that Herr Bonngart's masterly manœuvres at that hour were attended with the most complete success. And there was a spice of variety in the programme. He was, as has already been mentioned, most frequently at his club during the earlier part of the evening, and, on these occasions, he burst into his own house like a whirlwind, literally sweeping everything and everyone before him into their allotted chambers. For, if there is one thing the respectable German mind clings to and worships, long after it has dethroned all religion, it is the good fairy *Regularity*. To be regular is, in some way at least, to work out the

human destiny—to be a man and a German. He who does *not* go to bed at ten p.m. may be clever, but rest assured there is a latent devil in his constitution. So thought Herr Bonngart, and, in so thinking, echoed the belief of many millions of his countrymen. In England, too, it is said that, if you go to bed early and to church late, you cannot fail to command the respect of your fellow Britons. For are not all northern nations ardent worshippers of the great idol Respectability? And is not Bohemianism a thing to be abhorred?



## CHAPTER VIII.

### TWO NEW ACQUAINTANCES.

AND now Arthur was thrown daily more and more into the society of Louise. Till the present moment she had never stirred any sensitive chord in his breast. He had thought of her always as his beautiful German teacher—never as anything more—but now his meeting with Mary Martin had somehow set in motion something within him which he had fancied was at rest for ever, and this something—this *je ne sais quoi*—being once set in motion, was not inclined to become quiescent again in a moment.

He saw no more of Mary, neither did he care much to see her. She had set him thinking—or rather feeling—but she was not the one on whom a fancy like his could feed. Though she was pretty, amiable, loveable, she

was in the first place too young, and in the second place—if the truth must be told—a little too common-place, for the imagination of a poet. Immediately on his return from the hotel he had been struck by the contrast between her and the almost perfect beauty of Louise. The queenly attributes of the latter seemed at length to be making their due impression upon him. He began to care more for her society than he had done before. The lessons were protracted in a way which would have given a most favourable impression of his industry to anyone who did not know what sort of a teacher he possessed. As to any feeling of love towards her, Arthur stoutly denied to himself that this existed, or ever could exist, and in a way he was right. He admired her for her beauty and her intellect, but there was something wanting in her nature which forbade the possibility of any genuine love on his part. Neither in his humility did he once imagine (as has been already said) that she should ever care for him. They made good friends, he thought, nothing more, but it was, on her side at least, friendship of such sort as works like fire within

the veins. She grew to fancy that her passion was returned. His constant presence, the way in which he courted her society, the pleasure he evidently took in her conversation, all these seemed to prove that he was by no means indifferent to her charms; and this conviction added fuel to the flame. It never occurred to her that his admiration was purely artistic and intellectual—that his eye loved to rest upon her face and form as it would have rested on the face and form of some pictured Madonna, and that he listened to her talk without the slightest bias of partiality to warp his critical appreciation of its cleverness. And so the *Parcæ* wove the web of an unhappy destiny for the poor girl. Whether it were that Venus thus took revenge upon her for the numerous embassies sent to her in former days without avail, or whatever other deity were offended, certain it is that the once proud and inaccessible beauty began to experience unmistakably in her own person the sting and smart of that passion she had so often despised in others. For the first time in her life she felt herself really in love. Alas! for her, that that love should have been unreturned.

Though Arthur was guiltless of all intention in the matter, she might well think sometimes that he was by no means wholly indifferent. They had so much in common that, to her at least, it might not seem a great step to have all things so. She always brought him his breakfast, he not having yet acquired the German capacity for early rising. Then, when she was not required for domestic matters, they always studied together almost the whole morning, he teaching her English, she him German. Then in the afternoon, when the weather was fine, a party was generally made to go somewhere. It is one of the chief attractions at Bonn that it possesses an almost inexhaustible number of pretty walks in its neighbourhood. Generally the whole household went, except Theodore and the much-enduring Gretchen, but sometimes the party was smaller, and in all cases it seemed to happen that Arthur and Louise were thrown into a *tête-à-tête* together. It cannot be denied that he enjoyed these confidential moments. He hated formality of all kinds, he was ever longing for freer and freer intercourse amongst human beings ; and, although there

was but little real congeniality of sentiment between himself and Louise, there was much congeniality of thought. Besides, he was lonely and isolated—there was no one else in Bonn with whom he could exchange a word on anything like terms of equality—and so he may well have seemed to cling to her with a closeness that, with other people and under different circumstances, would have denoted the existence of a tender passion.

It was about a fortnight after the departure of the Martins that a walk was proposed to Küdinghoven. Arthur was always ready for these excursions—they formed the only break in the monotony of his life—and, besides, his enjoyment of the scenery never ceased. Herr Bonngart was, or supposed himself to be, busy, and his wife complained of rheumatism, but, for a wonder, Theodore condescended to go, so that the party consisted of him, Theresa, Louise, and Arthur. They started at two, meaning to reach Küdinghoven in time for coffee, and to return home for supper. When they reached the riverside, the “flying bridge” on which passengers cross was at the other side, and they had to wait a few minutes

for its return. It soon came, however, and they went on board.

“What clever contrivances these are!” said Arthur.

“Do you mean how cleverly they waste people’s time?” answered Louise.

“No, Fräulein, I really think it is clever to make the stream itself take one across.”

“Yes; but how slow the stream does it! Papa says that the ferryman is one of the most generous beings in creation, because he gives people at least a quarter of an hour on the water, and charges only six pfennigs.”

“That is true,” answered Arthur, “but, unless one is in a hurry, how charming it is to enjoy the *dolce far niente* on a raft like this!”

“But, excuse me, Mr. Vaughan, it is not a case of *far niente*, it is rather a case of *far qualche cosa di disaggredevole* — at least it requires rather an active exercise of patience.”

Arthur smiled. “Is it not as pleasant to sit here and watch the rippling waters, and enjoy the sunlit landscape, as to toil along a dusty road like footsore pilgrims?”

“Doubtless in itself, but not when one is *en route* to an object.”

They were still waiting ; the "bridge" had not yet started. It is, as all Rhine travellers know, a ponderous kind of raft, capacious and strong enough to convey carts and carriages, which is attached to a chain fastened in the river, and which, by an ingenious arrangement of the rudder, is slowly drifted from side to side of the river by the force of the current. At last, however, the sluggish ferryman appeared to have made up his mind to go. A bell was violently rung, and the rope which held them to the land, was just being cast loose when two figures were seen approaching on foot at a tremendous pace. The man waited when he saw them, and in a very few moments they reached the spot and made their way, out of breath, on to the "bridge." Arthur's attention had been attracted by their walk ; its speed was something astounding. A number of infinitesimal steps followed each other so rapidly, that it was almost impossible for the eye to count them. The result was a walk so surprisingly quick and active that every German who saw them pass looked round in wonderment after them, and muttered a long-drawn "ach !" whilst Arthur,

who was himself a good walker, was not a little surprised at the celerity of their performance. When they came on board, he eyed them with some interest. They were both very young men, one apparently about one-and-twenty, the other a year or two younger. There was little or no resemblance in their features, but their figures were much alike, both being small, slight, neat and compact, and there was besides an unmistakable air of similarity in their general appearance which marked them out as having a local, if not a blood, connection with one another. The eldest was very fair, with good features and bright blue eyes. The other was equally good-looking, but darker. Both were remarkably well-dressed, but not quite in English or German style, and Arthur was for a moment puzzled as to their nationality. He was, however, near enough to overhear their conversation, and the first few words settled this point. They spoke English well and, as far as phraseology went, very much like Englishmen, with a few exceptional idioms, but there was an indefinable something in the intonation which told Arthur at once that they came

---



from the other side of the Atlantic. Yet there was no nasal twang such as distinguishes the New-Englander, and none of the hopeless grammatical confusion which marks the uneducated American. But there was a certain fineness in their language, a straining after verbal effect in talking even on the most ordinary subjects, and a sharp, quick method of uttering the words, which was as far removed as possible from the solemn, languid drawl in which the Briton puts forth his well-worn conversational platitudes.

Arthur by no means shared the prejudice of some of his countrymen against Americans. On the contrary, he admired their country and was prepared to like them. And there was something in the appearance and manner of the two now before him which drew him towards them with a friendly feeling. He turned to Louise :—

“ Do you know those two gentlemen ? ”

“ What, those boys there ? No, I don’t know them, but I feel quite sure they are Americans.”

“ What makes you think so ? ”

---

"O, a number of things, but you will be offended perhaps if I mention them."

"I offended! Impossible. I am quite unprejudiced. Say what you like against me and my nation. If you are right it is well that the truth should be known. If you are wrong—pardon me for suggesting such a possibility—no one is any the worse."

"Well, then, I will tell you. In the first place, they must be English or American, because they speak English without an accent, and because no other nations have such marked peculiarities of figure and bearing. Secondly, they are not English, because they are dressed too neatly and too well. What Englishman ever showed an embroidered shirt-front and diamond studs in broad daylight? Thirdly, they have a brisker walk and a neater figure than most Englishmen. Fourthly, and most conclusively, look at their feet. Did you ever see an Englishman with such fairy-small feet, such true *pieds de luxe*?"

Arthur did as he was told, and was obliged to confess to himself that such small, narrow, perfectly-formed feet he had never yet beheld in connection with a masculine body.

"You are right," he said, "in all your remarks. In the matter of feet especially I blush for my countrymen. And yet I fancy ours may be more serviceable."

"Not if we may judge by the way these gentlemen walked to the boat. When did you ever go at such a rate?"

"When did I ever require to? Doubtless I *could* do it, but *le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle*."

"Any one may be famous at that rate. It reminds me of the story you once told me of the man who did not know whether he could play the violin or not, because he had never tried. I am afraid I have not so much faith in unproved powers."

"Don't you remember what we read this morning in Gray's *Elegy*, about 'mute, inglorious Miltons?' I do not claim to be one of them, but you might allow me to consider myself a grand but undeveloped pedestrian."

"Egoism! thorough English egoism! I wonder if the Americans are as bad in this respect."

"Much worse," said Arthur, smiling.

“That must be envy on your part. How many bad qualities you are exhibiting to-day. But look, one of those gentlemen is showing his money to his friend, and no doubt grumbling over our poor German coinage. They must be new comers here.”

The elder American had pulled out a handful of coin of all sorts, amongst which Arthur detected Austrian florins, French francs, Prussian thalers and groschen, together with some American dollars, which formed altogether a puzzling collection, the value of which no one but a most experienced accountant could have possibly hoped to determine. He was evidently at a loss what to pick out to pay for his passage across, and his friend seemed unable to afford him much assistance.

“What confounded money it is!” said the elder.

“I don’t see that,” answered the other, who, as Arthur subsequently discovered, had a singular knack of never agreeing with you in anything—“I don’t see that; the only difficulty is that we don’t quite know what to give.”

“That’s what I mean. And who is to

know when they have such a wretched lot of shocking old worn-out coins?"

"Give them a thaler, and see what change they return you," replied the other, magnanimously disposing of his friend's money.

"Thank you, but I don't care to invite people to cheat me. I ain't such a fool as I look."

"I hope not," answered the other, unmercifully.

This was said as the passengers were passing along the wooden landing-place towards the toll-house, where all fares had to be paid. Arthur gave what seemed to him a ridiculously small sum for his party—only two groschen—and smiled to himself at the magnificent proposition of the American to give a thaler and see what was returned. How the matter was finally settled between the two friends and the toll-man, Arthur did not stay to see.

He and his party walked on for some little while in silence, or with merely interjectional comments. At length Theresa, who was, if possible, in a worse humour than usual, exclaimed—

"I declare I think it's going to rain."

In vain Arthur looked all round the horizon and overhead for any sign of the approach of such a calamity. The sky was perfectly clear, the air warm and balmy, the weather such as might have contented the most fastidious. But Theresa took gloomy views of life, and delighted to inspire them into others.

"What makes you think we shall have rain?" asked Arthur.

"My feelings," answered Theresa solemnly. "I had a shooting pain in my shoulder, and I have never felt that without its being followed sooner or later by a heavy shower."

"Sooner or later!" exclaimed Arthur. "That is very possible."

"That is all I meant," retorted Theresa, snappishly.

"Theresa is always croaking," said Theodore. "She ought to have been a frog in a dry ditch, to fulfil her destiny thoroughly."

"And you a polypus in a beer-barrel," snapped out Theresa, who was given to repartee, and entirely unfettered by any considerations of good taste or kindness.

Theodore winced. It is curious how differ-

ently people view the same accusation at different times. In his *Verbindung* no one could pay him a greater compliment than to comment with admiration on his capacity for beer ; but somehow he did not like the same compliment from his sister.

After this it was not easy to carry out the usual programme for Louise and Arthur to walk together, whilst the other two went on by themselves. The frog and the polypus felt themselves, for the time at least, not by any means congenially disposed towards each other, and were anxious to shelter themselves under the cover of a general conversation. However, even the general conversation dragged rather. Louise was not at the moment inclined to put forth her conversational powers for the benefit of a mixed circle ; and Arthur had fallen into a fit of meditation—an occurrence which with him was not very uncommon.

At last they reached Küdinghoven, and ordered coffee and cake. Whilst these were being prepared, they ascended the hill at the back of the little inn, and enjoyed the magnificent view which was thus afforded them.

Then they sat down in a pleasant arbour, and drank the coffee with additional relish for having earned it by a tolerably long walk. As to Theodore, he drank the coffee, it is true, but found it quite insufficient to support his strength. More than once it was necessary for him to disappear into the inn, and on each occasion he returned looking more and more flushed, though he always excused himself by saying that he would just go into the shade of the house to cool himself. On his third re-appearance, Theresa said—

“I hope you are satisfied at last?”

“Quite. And you too, I trust?”

“Yes; satisfied as to the object of your visits indoors. You might have offered *us* some, however.”

“What do you mean?” asked Theodore, reddening.

“Why, beer to be sure. Why shouldn’t we have some, too? Mr. Forn is an Englishman, and all Englishmen like beer.”

“That is, English beer,” said Arthur. “I am afraid we have an insular prejudice even in that.”

Just as he was speaking, the two young



Americans entered the garden, looking very hot. It was evident from their conversation that they had lost their way, and that this had delayed them. They, too, ordered coffee and cake, and were soon enjoying it with all the zest of unimpaired digestions.

"Do you know," said Arthur to Louise, "I like the look of our friends there very much."

"Do you?" answered Louise. "I confess they seem to me rather insignificant."

"I wonder if they live in Bonn. If so, I've a great mind to call on them."

"No doubt they live in Bonn. But I thought you never called on anybody?"

"Never on the English. One can have enough of them in one's own country; but these are Americans, and that makes all the difference."

"Well, that astonishes me still more. I should have thought it as likely that a cat would call on a dog as an Englishman on an American."

"You might at least have compared me to the nobler animal," said Arthur, laughing.

"O, you may take your choice about *that*.

I only meant that the two nations are supposed to hate each other very cordially."

"The nations may. I really don't know. I hope not. But certainly *I* don't share in the hatred, if there be any."

"You astonish me. I didn't believe such magnanimity were possible."

"In me?"

"No, I mean in any Englishman, however impartial, since you must fish for a compliment."

"Well, I shall give you a proof of it, by calling on these two gentlemen."

"And will you take to diamond studs and open shirt fronts?"

"Will you present me with the diamonds?"

"Yes, on one condition."

"Which is——"

"That you become a naturalized American citizen."

"I've a great mind to take you at your word; but perhaps the time is not ripe for that yet."

"It is ripe for going, however," interposed Theresa, in German (she understood English, but was shy of speaking it). "I feel a heavy

dew falling, and I have no doubt as it is we shall all catch cold."

"Croaking again!" snarled Theodore.

"Ah! you can afford to laugh at such things," answered Theresa, sarcastically. "You have fortified yourself against them a good deal more than we have."

"It seems to me that, if you have not done so, it has not been for want of the will," retorted Theodore.

This last passage of arms between Theresa and Theodore had evidently been overheard by the Americans, who could not forbear smiling. This made Theresa still more angry, and, as she indulged her mood the whole way home, none of the party were very sorry to reach Herr Bonngart's house once more, which they did in good time for supper.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE SPINNERSTRASSE AND ONE OF ITS INHABITANTS.

EVERYONE who knows anything of Bonn must know the Spinnerstrasse. It is a comparatively new street, and is, in fact, even at the present moment hardly to be considered completed ; but some of the houses of which it is composed have existed for a good many years. One end of it debouches on the Colblenzerstrasse, whilst the other leads you into the country. A broad, straight, airy street, it has some pretension to beauty, not indeed of any regular type, but still pleasant and picturesque. The houses seem to have been built at very different times. Here you find an Italian villa standing a little way back in a pretty garden of its own, and, on the opposite side of the way, a truncated row of large

but commonplace-looking lodging-houses—in fact, houses of all sorts, shapes, and sizes, are to be found in the street. There is a nobleman's mansion towards one end, and a cigar-shop at the other. It is essentially an eclectic, comprehensive street. All classes and creeds here find a representative. Sixteen quarters lives cheek by jowl with mushroom gentility; the Jew salesman is next door to the Christian professor; the petty shopkeeper to the retired merchant. Two things, however, strike you most when you enter the Spinnerstrasse. First, the airiness of the situation; secondly, the horrible dullness which appears to possess the spot. At certain times in the day the street seems positively lifeless. Though nominally a thoroughfare, it is a thoroughfare which leads to no place that cannot be reached more directly by other routes, and hence it is left almost entirely to its own inhabitants. You may pass through the street without meeting a person or seeing any signs of life beyond a housemaid's cap at an upper window, or a chance dog on a doorstep. It is true that at certain times the street is livelier. In the

early morning and late in the afternoon troops of workmen going and returning make it for the moment noisy. Then, too, when the boys belonging to M. Maladroit's pension sally forth to take their exercise, there is no lack of lively commotion. But, as a rule, it is a street where decorousness and respectability hold sway rather than gaiety and Bohemianism.

But the *Spinnnerstrasse* has another and yet more marked peculiarity. It may be called the English quarter. It is a kind of Anglo-Saxon Ghetto—a district where foreigners from the British isles congregate by some sort of fatality. Though, as has been already said, German noblemen, professors, shopkeepers, lodging-house keepers, and others, are to be found here, yet fully two-thirds of the inhabitants are Anglo-Saxon. How this has come about no one knows. Whether, as the Germans assert, the English have been drawn hither by the unearthly dulness of the quarter, as helping them the better to recall to memory the gloomy island they have left, or, as they themselves have preferred to maintain, out of love for the fresh air which is certainly one of its characteristics

—the fact remains that, ever since the first erection of the street, they have constituted the major part of its population. When one set goes, another is always ready to take its place. And strange sets they are that thus succeed each other. As the worthy tradesmen of the town say, “No one comes to Bonn without a reason,” and the people with the most dubious reasons generally choose the Spinnerstrasse for their abode. At the time of our story there were officers there, or men who had been officers until the barbarous persecution of the sheriff had driven them from their native shores to seek a precarious subsistence amongst strangers. There were gentlemen who, having failed to solve in England the problem, how to make one sovereign play the part of two, had chosen Bonn as the scene of their subsequent and generally life-long, experiments. There were ladies of uncertain ages and still more uncertain incomes. There was even a gentleman, said to be the scion of a noble English family, who made a precarious livelihood by extracting corns, besides two who professed to give lessons in English, and a fourth who added the Latin grammar to his list of accom-

plishments. And, besides these doubtful personages, there were a number of English people whose sons and daughters were at Bonn for educational purposes, or who were themselves studying the German language. The highest English aristocracy of the place lived, like the highest German, in the Coblenzerstrasse, to which the Spinnerstrasse formed (and forms), as it were, a "feeder" and tributary, in which the less ambitious spirits might disport themselves at a considerable reduction in expense.

Such was the street in which, one fine afternoon, Arthur found himself. He had hardly ever been in it before, although Herr Bonngart's house was by no means far distant. The object of his present mission was to call on the young Americans whom he had seen some days before. He had ascertained their name and address from a mutual acquaintance and was now on his way to their house. It stood at the further end of the street, and was conspicuous for size, if not for beauty. On the door was the name "Herr Hoffmann," whom Arthur remembered to have heard of as an ex-advocate, who, finding his house too big



for him, was very glad to let portions of it to distinguished foreigners.

Arthur pulled the bell. An untidy servant answered the summons.

“Is Herr Lessing at home?”

“Yes, sir. Will you walk in?”

Arthur followed the girl into a large lofty room on the ground-floor, handsomely furnished, where he found the younger of the two Americans whom he had seen on the river. The latter coloured slightly as his visitor was announced, but received him politely and cordially. It was evident, however, that he was rather embarrassed at the interview.

Arthur uttered a few commonplaces, to which the American listened with great politeness, but the conversation flagged a little at first, owing to the diffidence of the latter.

“How do you like Bonn?” was, of course, one of Arthur’s first questions.

“Pretty well, sir,” answered the other, who seldom lost a chance of interpolating the word “sir.”

“As a town, it is not, I suppose, equal to some of the American Universities, is it?”

"I hardly know, sir ; I have not been to any of them ; but I am reading now for Harvard."

"Well, then, we are nearly having something in common," said Arthur, smiling. "I am a University man, and you are going to be one, so we ought to find points of agreement."

"What University were you at, sir ?" asked the American.

"Oxford."

"Oxford ! Why, I thought you were an American !"

"What made you think that ?"

"I don't fancy, sir, that Oxford men call often on Americans," answered the other, naïvely.

"Perhaps not. The loss is theirs, however, if they do not. For my part, I have a great admiration for America and all connected with it."

"You flatter us, sir. I feel the same towards England."

"When do you enter at Harvard ?"

"In about a year. I am going very late, and my brother still later. The fact is, we

were both in business and both changed our minds, thinking a profession would suit us better. I suppose your course at Oxford is very severe."

"By no means; but perhaps thorough, as far as it goes. But you know a man does not go to Oxford principally for mental training, or else, heaven help us!"

"What, then, *does* he go for?" asked the American, to whom any other object in belonging to a University was an entire mystery.

"Well, we fancy a University life gives a man a something—a *savoir faire*, a certain *non so che*—which cannot be acquired in any other way. It is a something not very easy to define, but yet which may have a considerable value."

The American opened his eyes. This view of a University was rather beyond him. But he was too polite to contradict. He changed the subject again.

"Apparently you speak Italian, sir."

"Very little," answered Arthur. "I have travelled through Italy and picked up enough for travelling purposes. Do you speak it?"

"Pretty fairly, I think," answered the other,

whose diffidence was purely physical, and who seldom lost an opportunity of letting the world know his merits.

"You have been in Italy, I suppose?" asked Arthur.

"Never; I hope to go there, however, next year. But I fancy we study the modern languages more in America than you do in England. We have such an immense foreign population, that it is at once more necessary and less difficult. For instance, we have three hundred thousand Germans in my own city, New York, alone."

"And do you speak German?"

"Sometimes I fancy I speak it better than English. Certainly it comes more naturally to me now."

"And do you know French also?"

"Not so well as German, but I can speak it fluently."

"I congratulate you on your accomplishments. I suppose this brings your languages to an end?"

"Not quite," answered the American, smiling. "I know Spanish pretty well."

Arthur opened his eyes. Here was a young

man who, by his own showing at least, knew four languages, besides his own, and he seemed not more than twenty. He must be either a genius or a braggadocio. With all his leaning towards the Americans, Arthur rather inclined to the latter opinion. And his subsequent intimacy with Lessing led him to discover that, whatever the failings of the young American, over-humility was not amongst the number.

"You know," added the American, "Spanish is a rather important language with us, sir. A good deal of Spanish is talked on our continent."

"And did you learn all this at school?" asked Arthur, "or have you specially devoted yourself to the modern languages?"

"Yes, sir, at school chiefly. I was taught French, German, and Spanish at school. The Italian I have picked up for myself."

"Have you been long in Germany?"

"About a year. We have a great idea in America of these German universities."

"Ah! you are studying at the University?"

"Certainly, sir. I am a regular student. Look here." And the American pointed to

an enormous and portentous-looking document in Latin, which stated that the *vir prænobilissimus*, Iltudus Lessing, had been admitted to all the rights and privileges of the University of Bonn.

"And how do you like German University life?"

"Pretty well, sir. There are plenty of first-rate lectures, but you needn't attend any, and you can't attend all. Student life here is as free and independent as even an American could wish—much more so, I believe, than at Harvard or Yale."

"Do you mean that there is no discipline at all?"

"Practically none. The authorities have certain powers, but they are hardly ever exercised. A student may do as much or as little work as he likes—it is left entirely to himself. Now I fancy at our universities they are compelled to attend a certain number of lectures a day, and to go to chapel."

"It is so at Oxford," said Arthur, "but I hardly fancied it was the same in America. I should have expected it rather in Germany."

"But you know, sir," said the American,

who was prepared to make any sacrifices at the shrine of politeness, "that Harvard is modelled exactly on the Oxford pattern. I do not mean to say that it is so good, but its customs are very much the same—at least so I have been told."

In such conversation the time passed pleasantly. Little by little the American threw off his shyness—a quality which rendered him almost unique amongst his countrymen—and became more and more interesting as a companion. Though his experience of life was necessarily limited, yet great natural ability and a national habit of observation had enabled him to make the best use of his time, and Arthur could not but feel that, though younger than himself, he was no unequal companion. Arthur inquired for the brother, but found he had left Bonn, and might not return for some time.

"I live pretty close at hand," said Arthur, as he took his leave, "so I hope we shall see a good deal of each other. By-the-way, are there many of your countrymen at Bonn?"

"A great many, sir, but I know very few. I have, however, a cousin at Miss Ross's school."

"That is the best school here, is it not?" asked Arthur, wondering whether it were the one at which Sir Peter Martin had left his daughter.

"They call it the best," answered Lessing, as he bowed his visitor out with ceremonious politeness, "but for my part I think all girl-schools equally worthless."

On his return home, Arthur met Louise, whom he had informed of his intended visit.

"Well, how did you like your new acquaintance?" she asked.

"Very much. He is clever, good-natured, and polite. What more can you want?"

"A heart," answered Louise, with no less sentiment than truth.

"That I should think was there also. But a man does not wear it on his sleeves for every daw to peck-at."

"Does he wear it anywhere as a rule?"

"You should not traduce us in that way. The masculine heart may be made of sterner stuff than the feminine, but it is quite as genuine."

"Well, if men in general have hearts, I am pretty sure Englishmen have none."



"What makes you think so?"

"They are always so hard, so cold, so impassive. Nothing seems to move or excite them."

"Ah! you prefer ginger-beer to port-wine."

"I know what you mean, for when I was in England I tasted some ginger-beer, and thought it horrid stuff. But good ginger-beer is better at any rate than vapid, spiritless port-wine."

"For 'vapid and spiritless,' read 'calm and self-controlled.' Is it not finer and nobler, and, in short, more God-like, to control one's emotions, than to be made their toy and plaything? But pray don't think that external calmness means internal heartlessness. There is no commoner but no greater error. 'Still waters run deep,' and a volcano is none the less a volcano because it is sheathed in perpetual snow."

"Well, I will try to believe what you say, but it seems so unnatural to conceal one's emotions."

"Yet it is often a kindness to other people to do so."

"You mean, therefore, it is a duty."

"In many cases certainly it is. Every one has his burden to bear, and it is selfish and inconsiderate in him to try to weigh down another with a portion of his own."

"I never before heard apathy defended on such high moral grounds."

"Apathy! that is begging the whole question. Apathy is stone-like—self-control God-like."

"Well, to change the subject," said Louise, "I have a piece of news for you. Did you not tell me you met an American on board the steam-boat when you came from Mainz?"

"Yes; he got out at Neuwied."

"What was his name?"

"Borrodale, I think."

"Then it is the same man. He has been here this afternoon."

"Here this afternoon! Do you know him then?"

"Not in the least. He wanted to see papa, but unfortunately he was out."

"Did you see him?"

"Yes; there was no one else at home, so I gave him an audience. The most extraordinary man. I could not help thinking of

you, and wondering if your American were at all like mine."

"Not in the least, I am happy to say. And is Mr. Borrodale's business a secret?"

"Profound, for he did not divulge it. He said he would call again tomorrow morning."

Arthur was curious to know what could have brought the brave and patriotic Borrodale to Herr Bonngart's house. But his curiosity did not long remain unsatisfied. Early the next morning Mr. Borrodale again presented himself. Herr Bonngart had an interview with him, the purport of which transpired at dinner-time. This meal Mr. Borrodale honoured with his presence, as it would have been altogether injurious to his reputation as a "'cute" and wide-awake man of business to have paid for a meal when he had the offer of one for nothing. Unfortunately it was Friday, and, though meat was always provided for Arthur, the rest of the family took fish and vegetables. This roused Mr. Borrodale's philanthropic ire. He knew it was useless to expect sympathy from the poor, deluded victims themselves, so he turned to Arthur, after expressing his sur-

prise at thus unexpectedly meeting him again, and said :

“ A strange custom this, sir.”

“ O, I’m quite used to it,” said Arthur, smiling. “ I’m only sorry I should set people such a bad example.”

“ A bad example ? And dew I understand yew tew say, sir, that yew consider eating God’s meat setting a bad example ?”

“ This, I believe, is bullock’s meat,” replied Arthur, hoping to stave off discussion on such a delicate subject.

“ No evasions if yew please, sir,” cried Mr. Borrodale, waxing loud and indignant ; “ Elijah Borrodale does not understand evasions.”

“ No doubt,” said Arthur, not wishing to quarrel — “ No doubt all that you say is very true. Did you come from Neuwied yesterday ?”

But Mr. Borrodale was not to be put off in that way.

“ No doubt, sir ! I should think there was no doubt on a point of this kind. I have not devoted me life, sir, to the study of gigantic social problems, and the best years of me existence to the advancement of human hap-

piness, without having had me attention drawn to things of this kind. And, though I'm nat'rally reluctant—very reluctant to refer tew it now—yet in justice tew meself, in justice tew me country, and in justice tew humanity at large, I will not hesitate to say that such a state of things is a cuss, sir, a most confounded cuss !”

Mr. Borrodale delivered this speech as if it had once formed a portion of some public utterance. Herr Bonngart looked up from his plate in admiration of the stranger's vehemence, but understood hardly a word that had been said, as the American had spoken in his own language. Not so the others. They had heard and understood most of the conversation, and naturally felt indignant. As to Arthur, he felt still more so, but he hardly knew what to do. Any attempt to turn the conversation seemed likely to be unavailing, but he determined to try once more.

“I have made the acquaintance of a countryman of yours here, Mr. Borrodale.”

“I congratulate yew, sir. Without conceit I may say that me countrymen are always worth knowing. What does he call himself ?”

“His name is Lessing.”

“Lessing!” shouted Mr. Borrodale. “I know him. That’s the young chap I mentioned to yew on board the steamer. His uncle is a man for whom I have a great respect, sir. I may say a very great respect. He’s a keen politician, sir, been shot at scores of times, and had to ride a rail in Virginny, because he ventured to speak a few words of Freedom to the neegurs. A very rising man, sir. He’s been almost everything, like meself; began with tailoring; hadn’t studied the business, and made an old gent’s pants so short, by cutting a bit off the legs to patch the seat with, that the old gent couldn’t go to meetin’ in them, so me friend was excommunicated. Then he took to writing. Wrote a volume of poems—I’ve got them somewhere—called ‘*Columbia victrix*,’ a pamphlet entitled ‘The American Eagle and the Canadian Goose,’—both very patriotic productions, sir—and some others. In the latter he advocated the immediate annexation of Canada. I agreed with him, sir, then, and dew now.”

“I should have thought, between you, it

would have been *un fait accompli*," said Arthur, with much gravity.

Mr. Borrodale turned round to look more closely at his neighbour. Arthur's calm expression and his own sublime self-esteem re-assured him.

"Well, sir, at thet time we did not pull together. Jack Lessing went ahead even of me, sir—think of thet. Since then he's become a professed politician, and mark me words, sir, that man will be President of the United States—President of the U-ni-ted States, sir—one of these days, or me name's not Elijah Borrodale."

Theresa and Louise raised their eyes in astonishment. They implicitly believed the prophecy, coming as it did from a man who knew so much of American affairs.

"Herr Consul," said Herr Bonngart in German, across the table, "have you told Herr Forn the object of your visit here?"

"No," returned Mr. Borrodale, "but I'll do't with pleasure. Herr Bonngart," he continued, turning once again to Arthur, "has a friend in America, a Mr. Lovell."

Arthur involuntarily started.

"What's the row, sir?" inquired the consul sternly.

"Merely that the name is so familiar to me," answered Arthur.

"It is not an uncommon one, sir. Well, as I was saying, this Mr. Lovell, who is also, I am proud to say, a friend of mine, has a daughter who is now in Europe, and he wrote to me, asking me to find a home for her in the bosom of some German family, where she might learn the language and finish her education. At the same time he mentioned Herr Bonngart to me. I am pleased to be able to add," (continued Mr. Borrodale with the manner of one making a speech) "that Herr Bonngart has most kindly consented to undertake the charge, and to afford Miss Lovell the comforts of a genteel home, and the shelter of his parental protection."

Mr. Borrodale ceased and looked round for applause. The news surprised most of the party. None but Herr Bonngart and his wife had been in the secret. As to Arthur, he regarded the matter with supreme indifference. He only hoped that the new-comer



would possess as few as possible of the peculiarities of her father's friend.

The consul did not remain long after dinner. He took an affectionate and magniloquent farewell of everybody, and stated that Miss Lovell might be expected in the course of a few days. On leaving he added to Arthur :

"I guess I shan't tell Mr. Lovell yew're here."

"Why not?" asked Arthur, astonished at the remark.

"Wal, the old hoss has a kinder objection to Britishers. He han't shaken off his prejudices like me."

"I must allow you have been very successful."

"I guess you ain't far out, young man. Adoo!"

## CHAPTER X.

### PAR PARENTHÈSE.

THE young American lady did not make her appearance quite so soon as had been expected. Day after day passed and no news of her arrived—no definite time was named for her to come. It might perhaps be well to turn this delay to account in describing an event in the past life of one of the actors in this history—Herr Bonngart's eldest daughter. It will tend to explain the sourness and spitefulness which had corroded any original good-nature she might have possessed, and which led at a later period to the most disastrous results.

If the Family Bible, which lay on a top shelf in Herr Bonngart's dining-room, could be believed, Theresa Bonngart was forty-one years of age at the time of this narrative.

She was the offspring of his first marriage with a Fräulein von Steinmetz, who had no choice but to become a governess or to accept the addresses of Herr Bonngart, and who, with true feminine discretion, had chosen marriage as the lesser evil. Though the worthy Herr himself was in the habit of praising his departed Lotta to the skies, there were not wanting those who asserted that this was done much more with the view of annoying his present, than of honouring his late, consort; and certain it is that during Lotta's lifetime no such eulogies had been known to escape his lips. In fact, it was pretty well understood in Bonn that Herr Bonngart had had the singular ill-fortune to marry a couple of shrews. The first had presented him with only one child, Theresa, who was unmistakably the residuary legatee of all her sainted mother's little infirmities of speech and temper.

At the present time these infirmities had attained a very high pitch. But to explain the cause of this, it will be necessary to go back a little in the narrative.

Theresa had not always been ugly, or sat

without suitors in her father's halls. On the contrary, twenty years before, she had been reckoned—as her sister was now—the *belle* of Bonn, and had had many disinterested applications for her hand and heart. It was unfortunate [for her that at that time her father had the reputation of being a man of some wealth, and that in this way, as his only daughter, she was regarded as a kind of heiress, as well as beauty. Amongst the suitors that this reputation brought her was a distinguished foreigner from Poland, who, whilst contenting himself with the title of baron, had that in his appearance which would not have disgraced a king. Long black hair fell in shining ringlets over his shoulders, a glossy moustache shaded his upper lip, pearl-white teeth glanced and gleamed beneath its shade, piercing black eyes looked you through and through with a kind of mesmeric power. And the dress of the hero was not unsuited to his dignified bearing. A semi-military frock coat, befrogged and embroidered, set off to great advantage his commanding figure, whilst a French hat of the latest fashion almost rivalled in glossiness

the locks upon which it rested. Altogether he was a man who might reasonably hope for success with the fairer portion of humanity, so far as this depended upon his external appearance. Then, too, his mode of living was sumptuous. He scorned lodgings—he took a suite of rooms in the best hotel in the place. All Bonn had heard of the *petits-dîners* with which he was wont to regale his bachelor friends. They were masterpieces of culinary skill, and invaluable auxiliaries in the art of making money disappear.

The baron's education had also apparently been good. It is true his German was ungrammatical, but then it was very intelligible, and none could deny that for a foreigner it was more than passable. His French was of the same description, very fluent and spoken with an excellent accent. His own language was Polish, but he seldom spoke it, as few, if any, of the *savants* of Bonn were able to converse in this mellifluous tongue. Altogether the host of the "Silver Moon" considered he had good reason to congratulate himself on his distinguished guest, whilst Bonn in general recognized with thankfulness

the compliment paid to the town by his continued residence.

Such was the man, who during carnival time was fortunate enough to make the acquaintance of Miss Theresa Bonngart. It was at a masked ball, given at the hotel which the baron was good enough to honour with his presence. It may well have been that Miss Bonngart's luxuriant hair, renowned for miles around Bonn, and the unusually stately bearing, which her mother, as a "von," had bequeathed to her, rendered her disguise less effectual than she herself believed. At any rate, a tall mask approached her, and commenced some of that sprightly *badinage* which seems so appropriate to carnivals. Theresa remarked at once that the mask was a foreigner. She answered in French. He replied in the same language, and with a fluency and ease which made her marvel at the grammatical solecisms which at times disfigured his remarks. She could not make him out. She was sure from his whole bearing and accent that he was not English—those islanders inevitably betray themselves in every tone and gesture. It seemed equally

certain he was neither French nor German. Yet his manner was distinguished. It was marked by an air of high-bred condescension which Theresa had never before met with, even in the most elevated of her admirers. And his compliments, though partaking a little of the freedom of carnival time, were yet judicious and acceptable.

"I have no idea who you are," said the mask.

"And have no right to inquire," answered Theresa.

"Certainly not, but I already know much."

"How so?"

"It is idle to suppose that you can conceal the truth by shrouding the face."

"What truth?"

"The great truth that you are lovely and amiable. This proclaims itself in every outline, attitude, and gesture."

"Sir, you are somewhat forward."

"Pardon, mademoiselle : if I am it is my theme, which inspires me beyond the bounds of conventionalism."

Theresa took off her glove by way of doing something, and began playing with it.

“*Voilà*, mademoiselle,” continued the mask, “one proof of what I say. Could such a hand belong to any but a queen of beauty?”

Theresa was pleased. She prided herself on her hand, which indeed, at that time, was a model of elegance. However, she answered jestingly—

“You know more of me than I do of you, or at least are more complimentary.”

“May I trust that our future acquaintance may make this remark no longer possible,” answered the mask with easy effrontery. “As one step towards it, allow me to escort you to the refreshment *salon*.”

All is allowable at carnival time. Theresa consented, and, to say the truth, was not loth to avail herself of the opportunity. She had always cherished a liking for foreigners. Her own countrymen seemed to her a little insipid, principally, no doubt, because they *were* her own countrymen, and because her familiarity with them had dulled her appreciation of their excellence. Here was a gentleman who had at least the spice of novelty to add to his other attractions.

They went arm-in-arm into the refreshment



room. A clumsy attendant upset a wax candle over the lady's dress. In a moment the thin muslin was a-blaze. It was one of those happy accidents wherewith fortune favours the brave. The mask was on the alert. He sprang forward in an instant, flung a cloak round the frightened lady, and extinguished the rising flame. In the effort his mask fell off, by accident or design. He hastily resumed it, and, removing the cloak from the burnt, but no longer blazing, dress, trusted that the lady had not been much alarmed.

"Not very much," answered Theresa, whose palpitating heart belied the assertion. "But I cannot remain here, with my dress in this state. Will you kindly call my escort? You will know him by a small white star upon his mask. I do not know how to thank you for what you have done."

"That was a trifle. Any one would have done the same. I shall be thanked sufficiently if you will occasionally think of me."

Theresa blushed beneath her mask. The other disappeared on his errand, and soon returned with the gentleman he had been sent

to summon. Theresa bade her deliverer adieu. But the mask was not inclined to let her escape so easily.

"May I venture to call upon you?" he asked in the softest and most mellifluous of whispers.

Herr Bonngart, who was on this occasion his daughter's chaperon, caught the words, and perceived also from the accent that the speaker was a foreigner.

"In this country, sir," he answered testily, "young ladies do not give gentlemen permission to call upon them."

"This gentleman has just saved my life, papa," interposed Theresa.

But Herr Bonngart was in a bad humour, and seemed disposed to resent even this interference with his daughter.

"You might have called me."

"But you were not on the spot, papa."

"You mean you had left me," answered Herr Bonngart still more irritably.

The foreign mask interposed—

"I apologize most profoundly," he said, "for the liberty I have ventured to take. I know it is not usual to seek to carry a

carnival acquaintanceship further. And it is very natural that the gentleman should decline to grant me the permission I seek until he knows at least who and what I am. Permit me, sir, to offer you my card."

And with the words, he gracefully handed to Herr Bonngart a large gilt-edged card, surmounted by a coronet, and having the words

"LE BARON ADOLPHE DE POLONIASKI"

printed upon it in imposing type. At the sight of this, Herr Bonngart's feelings underwent a sudden change. It was not that his eye was fascinated by the mere title, for barons in every stage of poverty and pride swarmed like locusts around his daily path, but this was not a German baron, and besides he had already heard of the family as wealthy and distinguished. His manner thawed at once.

"The Herr Baron will appreciate a father's solicitude," he observed. "But both my daughter and I shall have much pleasure in welcoming you at our house, and I esteem myself fortunate in having made your acquaintance. Allow me to thank you, Herr Baron, for your kind assistance to my daughter."

"I can never thank you enough!" added Theresa.

The baron again protested he had done nothing to deserve such gratitude. Then he took Herr Bonngart's proffered card and escorted Theresa to her carriage.

Thenceforth all went merry as a marriage bell on both sides. The baron called the very next day, and repeated the operation almost every succeeding day. It was evident he was deeply smitten with the charms of the fair daughter of the house, and Theresa was obliged to confess to herself that at last her heart was touched. Once before she had fancied it so, but circumstances had then been such as to bid her stifle in its birth any feeling of attachment. A young doctor had dared to raise his presumptuous hopes to her hand. At first his youth, his personal beauty, the amiability of his disposition, and the masculine vigour of his mind, had inclined her to look kindly upon him. She had even fancied that she loved him. But any idea of accepting him as her husband had never so much as entered her mind. Her ambition forbade it altogether. Was she to throw away her precious

gifts of beauty on a commonplace medical drudge? He might figure as a supernumerary in the great tragedy of Rejection, which she was always acting, but more than this was not to be thought of. And when the distinguished foreigner appeared upon the scene, she thought it would not be amiss to give all her former lovers a polite dismissal. There were several. A rich banker, a young student, a poor scion of nobility, and one or two more. For these, however, she cared but little. The banker was old, the student ridiculous, the aristocrat stupid, the others poor. But it cost her more to dismiss the doctor.

It so happened that the baron had intimated his intention of calling one day at three o'clock. Theresa fully expected that he would take this opportunity of laying himself, his rank, and his possessions at her feet. Rather to her annoyance the doctor called at half-past two. She, however, received him, knowing that he never stayed long. After a few preliminary remarks, he said suddenly :

“Miss Bonngart, I love you. I have loved you ever since I saw you. Forgive my abruptness. I can restrain myself no longer.

I live only for you : I would give all I possess for one smile from your lips——”

Theresa made as if she would speak, but his impetuosity prevented her.

“Hear me out ! Do not crush me to the earth by a refusal ! I know I am poor, and as yet undistinguished. But, with you at my side, I should soon attain to wealth and fame. Without you, I shall die—die by inches, hopelessly, for my love for you has taken possession of my whole being. Tell me, Theresa, you will be mine !”

Theresa was always self-possessed—never, perhaps, more so than now. The doctor had sunk down on one knee before her, in the old-fashioned attitude which in him did not seem ridiculous, because he spoke and felt with the old-fashioned fervour. His handsome face was turned towards her with a wonderful blending of emotions. Intense desire, passionate eagerness, hope still struggling with intuitive despair—all were there in characters of fire. And opposite him stood Theresa (she had risen as he knelt), not quite calm, it is true, but very nearly so, at least in outward semblance ; but all the while profoundly convinced

of the importance and the awkwardness of the crisis. The baron might appear at any moment, and who should say how long such a discovery as he must then make might postpone his expected declaration? She made up her mind to act, and that with promptitude and vigour. Yet there was that in the look and bearing of her suitor which determined her to act with a consideration for his feelings she might not otherwise have shown. She would not ridicule him.

"Herr Doctor," she said, very gravely, "I am honoured by the proposal you have made me. You will forgive me for adding that it is one which, under no possibility, can I entertain."

The doctor rose from his knee. His piercing eyes looked full and searching into her face. He read there no sign of weakness. For him the lovely features became as a Medusa-head, petrifying his heart's life. But he was too proud to sue for pity. He only said—

"And that answer is final?"

"Quite!"

"I have been deceived. I thought you

loved me, or I might not have loved you so desperately. Now, however, it is over. Over for ever ! And what makes life worth having is over also !”

Theresa was shocked at the pallor which overspread his face. It seemed, verily, as if the ruddy glow of life had been changed on a sudden into the white, ghastly glitter of a corpse-light. But she remained firm. He turned to go.

“May you never regret this !” he said.  
“Adieu !”

Theresa was cold and calculating, incapable, perhaps, by nature, of a really grand passion ; yet, when he had gone, her composure, to some extent, deserted her. “Had she ever really loved him ? Did she love him still ?” These were questions that would force themselves in upon her mind. She forbore to answer them, but they made her feel, to say the least, uncomfortable. And the memory of that white, despairing face haunted her thoughts for long, long years. It was, she knew full well, the certain indication of a devoted attachment. Should she ever meet




with anyone else who would love her as this man loved her ?

There came a knock at the door. The baron entered, dressed with even more than his usual care, and oiled and essenced to a very high degree. Theresa's instinct had not misled her. He had selected this afternoon for his *coup d'amour*. Neither did he lose much time in coming to the point.

"Miss Bonngart," he said, with well-affected feeling, "I have a communication to make to you on which my entire happiness depends."

This was said in his fluent, ungrammatical French, the language he spoke by preference. Miss Bonngart well knew what was coming, but pretended ignorance, as considering this the most comfortable mental attitude. The baron continued :

"For some time past I have ventured to cherish a hope that you did not regard me with complete indifference. But I can bear the suspense no longer. I must tell you, Miss Bonngart, how deeply I am attached to you : say that I may hope to have this attachment returned."




The baron had not found it necessary to go down on his knee—indeed, his trowsers were altogether unsuited to that attitude—but he had ventured to seize Miss Bonngart's hand, and had not been repulsed. The light of triumph twinkled in his eye, and a not dissimilar coruscation illumined that of Theresa.

The next day all Bonn was made aware of the event through the following advertisement, which Herr Bonngart, in accordance with a German custom, lost no time in inserting in the *Bonner Zeitung* :

“It is hereby announced to relations and friends that Theresa, daughter of Johann Bonngart, Rentner, Bonn, and Carlotta (*née* von Steinmetz), his deceased wife, was this day formally betrothed to the Baron Adolphe de Poloniaski.”

It was this announcement which brought about a great catastrophe, but averted a, perhaps, yet greater. The *Bonner Zeitung* sometimes travels into distant parts, and it so happened that a certain Baron Adolphe de



Poloniaski, who was at that time in Paris, caught sight of his own name in the little paper, and spared five minutes from the fascinations of that queen of capitals to write a few lines to Herr Bonngart. His letter ran thus :

“MONSIEUR,—

“I HAVE just seen that some rascal (*coquin*) has been using my name in Bonn, and is now announced as betrothed to your daughter. Permit me to mention that I and my elder brother (now in Siberia) are the only persons in Europe who have a right to the name Poloniaski. I fancy the impostor who has been deceiving you must be my old French courier, Adolphe Meurier, whom I was compelled to discharge from my service for theft. He is a good-looking fellow, has, like most couriers, a smattering of all languages, and is one of the most consummate rogues still unguillotined. With many apologies, &c., accept, &c., &c.,

“ADOLPHE DE POLONIASKI.”

It is scarcely necessary to add that the false

baron was not long in decamping after he had read and digested this letter. His coolness, however, did not desert him. To all Herr Bonngart's bluster he replied, "I am ready to go with you before the magistrate at any moment." To all the maiden's reproaches—"You might still do much worse than marry Adolphe Meurier." His only real difficulty lay with the host of the "Silver Moon," who had begun, at last, by a sort of hotel-keeper's instinct, to suspect the solvency of his distinguished guest. The latter, however, was too clever for a German Boniface. Leaving some heavy boxes behind him, he bade adieu, for the time, to Prussian territory, and Boniface, when he attempted to console himself for this abrupt departure by breaking open the boxes, found the stones of disappointment in place of the bread of consolation. With great injustice he then turned upon Herr Bonngart, asserting that, but for the latter, he should never have given the *soi-disant* baron such extensive credit. In this way the whole history got wing, and poor Theresa was compelled to follow her lover's example, and to take flight for a while, in order to escape the ridicule.

which the story brought upon her. It seemed, too, to have the effect of keeping off other suitors, and hence the once proud and petted beauty had come to be, at the time of our narrative, a cross-grained and petulant old maid.

## CHAPTER XI.

FLORENCE LOVELL.

PERHAPS of all Theresa's surviving passions that of jealousy of her sister was the most active. As dowager-beauty her dislike to the beauty-regnant was extreme. Though the sisters occupied the same room, and in public maintained some appearance of cordiality, a perpetual feud was smouldering between them. They were, after all, only half-sisters, and, to use a vulgarism, it was "the smaller half." It is true that, so long as nothing in the way of philandering was in question, the high contracting parties maintained their diplomatic relations unimpaired. But anything in the shape of a real suitor for Louise was sure to superinduce an imbroglio. It was to their mutual relations what the Turkish question is to modern diplomacy.

Hostilities were sure to set in with more or less severity. Of this Louise had already had abundant experience. She had had perhaps more than her fair share of suitors, and had recalled vividly to her sister's mind her own triumphs of twenty years before. And now again Louise began to be aware that her sister scented mischief, and that she was prepared at any moment to come to an open rupture. All women have keen eyes for love intrigues, and none more so perhaps than those whose own experience of them has been at the same time extensive and disheartening. Such was Theresa's case. And her eyes, though no longer bright enough to allure admiring lovers, were to the full sufficiently keen to detect even an embryonic flirtation. Her nose, though now pinched and thin, retained all its old exquisite sensitiveness in the way of scenting out possible engagements. And indeed, in the present instance, it must be confessed there was no great difficulty in the way. A less sharp observer than Theresa could hardly have failed to detect in the conduct and manner of Louise a more than suspicious leaning towards Herr Bonngart's

English guest. It was not only that they were so much together, apparently to their mutual satisfaction—it was that, in the case of Louise, there was a constant restlessness and *dissatisfaction* when Arthur was absent. The “aching void,” which only successful love can fill, had taken possession of her heart. This was as evident as daylight to the experienced eyes of her sister. That which was not quite so evident, yet which seemed also to have much probability to support it, was an equal attachment on the part of the Englishman. There was much that made Theresa think this more than likely, yet she could not attain to such absolute certainty on this head as she had reached on the other. But, anyhow, as affairs stood, she had more than enough to excite her jealous anger. Though she had sense enough to be aware that the day was gone by when she could complain, like Juno, of her slighted beauty, yet she was not slow, in the recesses of her heart, to exclaim indignantly against the affront done to her seniority. Beautiful or ugly, she had clearly a right to be married before her younger sister, and any



attempt on the part of the latter to contravene this primary law of sisterly relationship was an act of the most deeply-dyed *lèse-majesté*, to be resisted and suppressed with unrelenting severity.

In this case, however, it was not so easy for Theresa to put her usual tactics in practice. In the first place, Louise took care not to admit her sister into her confidence. On the contrary, she did what in her lay to conceal her attachment. It was impossible for Theresa to discover how far the conspiracy had really gone, or even to prove its existence, however convinced of this latter point she might be in her own mind. On no former occasion had Louise been really in love. She had encouraged this and that suitor, only that she might not be without the usual *entourage* of an acknowledged beauty. And she had always rather ostentatiously taken her sister into her confidence, as by so doing she had gratified her own sense of superiority. But now Love had brought Prudence in his train. It had mattered little what Theresa knew, when what she might do was indifferent. Now, however, Louise felt

that momentous issues were involved in the result of her attachment, and that it behoved her, above all things, to keep her sister as much as possible in ignorance of its existence. She *felt* this—she did not think it. Hardly yet had the actual words come into her own soul, “I love,” but the passion itself was there, however vague and undefined. And in spite of her efforts, it was as impossible to hide it from others as to ignore it herself. Every look expressed it, however cold and commonplace might be her words.

Hers was indeed an unhappy position. The long-sighted Love-God was playing her a scurvy trick at the last. There had been a time, and that not so very long ago, when if Arthur had thrown himself at her feet and offered her far more than he apparently possessed, she would have rejected him without a moment’s hesitation. And now he was to her the breath of life. She hung on his lips—she watched his every action—she enshrined him involuntarily in the rich sunlight of her love-inspired phantasy. She saw in him more than a man—a king, a hero, a demi-god. She blushed to herself at the feeling. She reproached

herself for having suffered her mind to dwell upon him, whilst he gave but uncertain signs of similar devotedness. She knew not with any security what he thought of her. True, catching at every straw of act and word, she could sometimes build up a fair cloud-castle of reciprocated love, but she herself, in her calmer moments, could not but be aware how fragile were the materials of which it was constructed. His manner to her was always kind, sometimes it was even more. It was the sort of chivalrous devotedness, born half of admiration, half of artistic sentiment, which a poetic nature so often feels for a young, beautiful and clever woman. In one thing Louise was not wrong. Arthur certainly liked her. Certainly he sought her society and enjoyed her conversation, little thinking the while what mischief he was doing. For this, his extreme humility and the consciousness of his own defects of face and figure were really responsible. It never occurred to him that the brilliant beauty could care for him, otherwise than as a friend. He had heard from others much of her coldness and *hauteur* and inaccessibility. He knew how many suitors she had pitilessly rejected, and he, not unnaturally, concluded she was


possessed of a lofty ambition, and would be the last person in the world to think of stooping to his level. And so he maintained a very friendly bearing, which became every day more and more confidential. No wonder that Louise should whisper to herself something, in which hope daily grew stronger than fear, and that Theresa should consider it high time to devise a counterplot. No wonder, too, that Arthur should live on unsuspectingly, though all the time the cause and focus of so much that was of life and death importance.

Nor was Theresa the only person who kept a watchful eye upon the progress of events. Though Frau Bonngart spent so much of her time in bed, she used her waking hours to excellent purpose. No one knew better than she, not only what was going on in her own house, but what transpired in the whole town. It is not to be supposed, then, that the growing inclination of Louise for the young Englishman escaped her watchful eye. She had been perhaps the first to detect it. But she was a prudent woman. She determined for the present to have neither part nor lot in the matter. Should it come to anything, it

would in her eyes be well. She had an exaggerated idea of the wealth of Englishmen. At any rate there could be no doubt that Arthur would be no unequal match for her daughter, should the latter wish to accept him. It would be best, then, to let matters take their course. Even the Fates must have time and space wherein to spin-out the threads of love and life. So the watchful mother said nothing, but thought much.

Things were in this state when a sudden change took place in Herr Bonngart's family. His hospitable doors were thrown open to receive a new guest. With him certainly charity began at home, and it was charity too of such an all-embracing description that it "thought no evil," even of "the root of evil" itself. In other words, all preliminaries pecuniary and domestic having been duly arranged, the long-expected Miss Lovell at last made her appearance on the scene.

Arthur was out for a walk with Lessing when she arrived. His acquaintance with the young American had already ripened into intimacy, and, as they were studying Italian together, a day never passed in which they did not meet. On his return home, the first



thing that met Arthur's eye, was an enormous accumulation of lady's luggage of all sorts, shapes, and sizes, in the hall. Squatting, Cerberus-like, by these was a stout, middle-aged negress, dressed with all the gaudiness in which ladies of her complexion delight. A huge bonnet, trimmed with bright yellow ribbons, and further decorated in the interior with large, red roses, formed a magnificent setting for her plump, good-natured face. There were more bright ribbons about the neck, and her shawl was composed of alternate stripes of black and yellow. As to her dress, it appeared to have once formed part of some gay drawing-room chintz. Huge peonies chased each other over a light fawn-coloured ground, and gave the dark proprietress of the dress a distant and grotesque resemblance to *Flora Africana*, in the maturity of her swarthy charms. As regards the face of the negress, Arthur saw at once that it expressed two qualities most unmistakably, the first, *good-nature*, the second, *self-importance*. A third trait in the good lady's character he did not detect at the time, but was not long in discovering afterwards, namely,


*fidelity*. These three may be said to have made up all that was noticeable in Aunt Letty's character.

Passing with difficulty through the chaos of boxes, Arthur made his way towards the drawing-room, where he heard the sound of voices, one at least speaking in a very high key, and in an accent by no means unfamiliar. He opened the door, and in so doing nearly upset Mr. Borrodale, who was performing his favourite evolution of balancing himself backwards on a chair, which in this case reached nearly to the door.

"I beg your pardon," exclaimed Arthur.  
"How do you do?"

"Don't mention it, sir," said Mr. Borrodale, eyeing him, however, with some suspicion, as if not quite certain that he had not intended a practical joke. "I flatter meself it takes a good deal to upset Elijah Borrodale, sir."

"I should think so," answered Arthur abstractedly, for his eye had been caught by the apparition of the new-comer at the other end of the room, and he stood for the moment bewitched by the spectacle before him.



It was a young girl of eighteen, who struck him in a moment as something quite out of the range of his former experience. It was not beauty—at least, it was not this alone. It was not wit, fancy, artlessness. Beauty in its grandest forms he had often seen. Wit had often flashed out upon him from the lips of loveliness, like lightning from the serene sky of which Horace speaks. At the first glance, he was well aware that Miss Lovell was not classically beautiful. His critical eye could not but note every deviation from the antique standard, even when it cared least to do so. Her figure was slight and small, almost child-like, and instinct with all a child's ease, and grace, and lissomeness. But it was her face which riveted his gaze. There was no Grecian profile, no classical contour—thus much he saw at once. It was no Hebe, no Naiad—type of a perfect, sensuous beauty, with the low forehead which tells the whole story of the past condition of woman-kind—that sat there before him. His poetic soul caught in a moment the conviction that it was the very Ideal of the Present that he saw.

All there was life, and change, and motion.



The rigid forms, the crystallized traditions, the unrelenting and immutable perfection which, in its very perfection, is imperfect because it leaves nothing for hope to desire, or imagination to supply : all this, which constitutes the beauty of the Past, was not to be found in her. She defied the rigid rules of art, safe in a freer, truer beauty which Nature herself had given. And yet it was not so much what she was, as what she pointed to, that constituted her supremest charm. Her beauty was above all things *suggestive*. Nothing definite, nothing fixed, nothing formal—these were its negative characteristics. It depended not at all on statuesque regularity of feature, but on expression—joy-sunlight and sorrow-cloudlets alternating in fleeting blush-tints upon her face—arrowy, meaningful glances from the deep heaven of her eyes—wondrous messengers of feeling going to and fro around her tell-tale mouth. She was of such sort that you could not look *at* her, you must look *into* her. With her the flesh was not the solid wall which forms so strong a barrier betwixt

soul and soul ; rather was it the thin, transparent robe, through which each spiritual beauty shines radiant forth.

And yet, if, rule and compass in hand, you approached her, saying to yourself, "Wherein lies her beauty and what constitutes her charm ? Come, let me measure, and gauge, and appraise, and docket her attractions, after due form and precedent," you would find it hard to say what made her what she was. True, her hair was rich, luxurious, fine as the gossamer's web, soft as flossy silk, sailing like a golden argosy over the horizon of her rounded shoulders, each tress fraught with priceless treasure to him who should be privileged to consider it his own. True, her complexion was as clear and pure as some placid lake, whereon each passing cloudlet of emotion mirrored itself in beautiful distinctness. True, the rich depths of her beaming eyes—eyes of that strange, deep tint, half-green, half-blue, which one sees sometimes in distant oceans—were as a palace wherein a kindred soul might banquet upon joy. True, her mouth was small, and her lips were bright and

soft as the rose-bud, still moist with morning dew. But it was not these that constituted her charm. Even in these a keen critic might have discovered faults. And then her nose was *un très peu retroussé*, her forehead by no means perfectly proportioned, whilst many other failings were open to detection. But, as you gazed, you could not think of failings or perfection : you could think only of *her*. Her whole being drew you to itself with cords of strong and wizard-like enchantment. It was the *tout-ensemble*, the soft, winning sweetness of a fresh, young soul, streaming forth in love and light from a bright and graceful body, that really constituted her attraction. It was the triumph of divine Nature over the worn-out formality of conventional act and thought, which, seeming to be consummated in her person, stirred a tender chord in the heart of every one who saw Florence Lovell.

All this and more passed through the mind of Arthur as he gazed. He had already been introduced to her, and had uttered some commonplaces, scarce wotting what he said in the fervour of the new feeling which convulsed

his heart. Had he listened more attentively he would have noticed that the new-comer spoke in that rapid, vivid way by which her countrywomen distinguish themselves from English girls; and, moreover, that though her language was refined and polished, it did not lack occasional Americanisms.

He recovered himself, however, almost immediately, and the conversation went on, as conversation is wont to do, commonplace and anacoluthonic. Mr. Borrodale played the chief part in it, and Arthur, as he heard him, could hardly understand how he and Miss Lovell could have struck up any acquaintanceship, however slight.

"I hope you will like Bonn, Miss Lovell," said Arthur.

"So do I," answered the young American, "and I must say I like what I have already seen of it."

"Bonn ain't a bad little spot," interposed Mr. Borrodale. "Naterally, it han't the imposing a-spect of our large towns, and these Rhine hills han't the majestic grandeur of the bluffs of our Hudson, but it ain't a bad little lo-cation, at least for a time."

"Well, now," said Louise, who did not like to hear Bonn spoken of slightly. "We think Bonn very nearly perfect."

"Naterally—quite naterally," answered the consul, with lofty condescension. "You've never been in the Land of Freedom, I guess, Miss."

Miss Lovell turned to Arthur: "How do you like Bonn?" she asked. "You are an *habitué* of the place, and yet not so partial as a native. I mean to go by your opinion."

"Alas! that I should have none to give you. I like all places equally well or equally ill, I hardly know which." And Louise noticed that the old shade of sadness passed over the Englishman's face.

"That is too bad of you," said Miss Lovell, with a merry smile. "I rely entirely upon you, and you give me no help. You remind me of the knife-grinder in Canning's poem."

"It is true. 'Story! God bless you, I have none to tell, sir.' I may parody that and say, 'Opinion! God bless you, I have none to give.'"

Louise interposed : " I think it is too bad of you to say nothing in our defence."

" 'Taint possible to say much for Bonn," growled Mr. Borrodale.

" '*Qui s'excuse s'accuse,*' " answered Arthur. " Bonn needs no defence ; its beauty and healthiness are well known. But Miss Lovell asked me a purely personal question—how *I* liked it, and really I neither like it nor dislike it in itself, though it is, of course, now endeared to me by the presence of several friends."

" Endeared !" It seemed to Louise a strong word. Might it not have been used with special reference to her ? At the thought a delicious thrill rippled through her soul.

" Well, I guess I'll have to judge for myself, after all," said the young American.

" You are more likely to be satisfied with such a judgment," observed Arthur, smiling.

" Very like," answered the other, naïvely ; " but you ought to have answered my question, all the same. Now I guess I'll see about my things. Where's Aunt Letty, I wonder ?"

Aunt Letty was at hand, and the two ascended the stairs together, preceded by Theresa and Louise, who did the honours for their new guest. Her room was between Arthur's and that of the two sisters.

"It's all too delightful," said Florence to Louise, when the latter had shown and explained everything. "I shall be as happy here as a queen, and I hope we shall be such great, great friends!"

Louise said she hoped so too. She was already favourably impressed with the newcomer.

Then there was a wonderful fuss and commotion whilst the young lady's "things" were being brought up and disposed in due order for unpacking. Aunt Letty was great on an occasion like this, and lost no time in demonstrating unmistakably that no one but herself was at all equal to the emergency. Florence looked on, merely venturing, now and then, to make a suggestion, which, in the majority of cases, was at once "pooh-poohed" by her self-sufficient attendant. This, however, was merely a piece of Aunt Letty's diplomatic caution. It was her cue to appear in public superior to

all advice, but in private she was always ready to carry out the slightest wish of her mistress—not, indeed, always at the moment, and as a consequence of the expression of the said wish, but, as it were, in the exercise of a kind of royal prerogative, acting in singular harmony with the needs of the occasion.

Florence was only too well aware of this peculiarity in Aunt Letty's constitution. She knew it was hopeless to expect any comfortable arrangement of her "belongings," so long as strangers were present. No true believer—no green-turbaned descendant of the great prophet of Mecca—ever looked more suspiciously on a *giaour* than did Aunt Letty on an inter-loper in her mistress's room. It was not long, however, ere Theresa and her sister, finding they could be of no assistance, withdrew. Then all went smoothly. The good negress busied herself in an almost superhuman manner in making the chamber comfortable, and it was not long before a considerable portion of success crowned her laborious efforts.

Meanwhile, Arthur, sitting below, caught, through the storm-blasts of Mr. Borrodale's



loud-voiced conversation, the faint, but musical, echo of some simple, lively canzonet which the new guest was warbling overhead.

What was it that made his heart beat so tumultuously at the sound ?

## CHAPTER XII.

### DIES AMBROSII.

AND now Herr Bonngart's household settled down into another long period of routine employment. Routine, indeed, only, perhaps, in so far as it was externally regular. For there can be no routine of the heart. Actions can be made to conform to some prescribed rule, but that which sets them in motion must always be more or less original and untrammelled. And so, in Herr Bonngart's establishment there was a wondrous regularity of meals and lessons and walks, combined with much irregular tumultuosity of the heart.

In one respect, Arthur was the most regular of all—in respect, namely, of what Louise called his “idleness.” He never could be got to appear of a morning before nine o'clock,

and in this, as Louise herself frankly confessed, he only followed the example of every other English guest who had ever favoured them with his presence. But this bad habit of Arthur's met, in these days, with a reward which certainly it did not deserve. It brought about a regular *tête-à-tête* between him and Florence. She, too, was prone, not indeed to rising late, but to breakfasting at nine o'clock. It had always been her hour at home, and it enabled her to get through sundry little bits of work before breakfast, which would otherwise have crowded themselves in upon her other occupations. It was in all innocence that she acted thus. She had not altered her hour, and it never occurred to her that anyone should suspect her of having done so. There was, indeed, such a straightforward simplicity in her character that some people mourned over her as a consummate hypocrite. For in this, as in all other things, extremes are wont to meet.

As to Arthur, he did not yet know exactly how he regarded Miss Lovell. That there was something in her which attracted him strongly — thus much he had allowed to

himself at first. Her mere appearance, the ever-freshness and radiancy of her look, her sprightly talk, her graceful, vivid movements—all these projected sunshine on his path. He knew he liked to see her, to be near her, to listen to her talk, to feel her influence upon him. He knew, too, that there was a bond of sympathy between them. They both could *feel*. Both alike set small store by forms, fashions, conventionalities, cant, jargon, and such-like. Both alike in all things strove to get nearer and nearer to Nature, to nestle in her bosom, and to clothe themselves in the mantle of truth which she alone could give them. Not, indeed, that in the case of Florence there was any such mental analysis as would have enabled her to extract a principle from the phenomena of her own character. She lived, she thought, she acted, as she did, because she was what she was. The fact was enough for her ; she never pondered on the “wherefore” or the “how.”

But with Arthur it was different. He had the habit of mental analysis and cross-examination. He could not help arraigning his will at the bar of his reason and asking what it

wanted, and why. And so he treated himself with respect to Florence. What was she to him? he asked. Nothing—absolutely nothing. A bird which stopped for a moment to drink at the same fountain and then winged its way upwards into the blue ether. So different in age, in appearance, in everything except the one bond of mutual sympathy. Yes, it was this, and this alone, which made him covet her society. He was sure of it. It was pleasant to be understood and appreciated. Had she been a bearded sage the pleasure would have been the same—here he stopped a moment, suspicious. However boldly he might talk, was this, then, quite the truth? Yes, it was. Miss Lovell was a new acquaintance. It were absurd self-injustice and self-torture to wring from himself a confession of any weakness with respect to her. And yet it was odd how exactly he timed himself to join her at her breakfast.

What ambrosial breakfasts those were! Head-to-head and, as it seemed, heart-to-heart. With what a glorious freshness she burst in upon the morning, taking the sulky day by merry storm, and banishing all care,

and gloom, and sorrow. It was this angelic freshness of face, and form, and heart, and spirit which Arthur was never tired of admiring. There was the artlessness, the utter simplicity of the child in union with the keen intellect of the adult. And—what he might have recognized at the time as a significant sign of her influence over him—so absorbed was he in the contemplation of her essential nature, that he had known her some days before he had any idea how she was dressed.

In that, however, the young American was almost faultless. Bright, but not gaudy, dresses, fitting her slight form to perfection, seemed to harmonize with the cheerfulness of her disposition, and below them the tiniest, fairest feet “like little mice, stole in and out,” as Suckling says, with a distracting perfection of contour. Her hands, too, were of the same exquisite smallness and delicacy. It was no slight privilege even to see them. But to feel one on your arm, nestling, dovelike, in the carelessness of familiar intercourse, was to feel a thrill shoot along the channels of life—or rather an acceleration of life itself.

But where, during these morning half-

hours, was Louise ? It was she who brought them their coffee, but she seldom or never stayed. When it was her housekeeping week it was impossible, and at any time difficult, for her to find leisure so early in the day. She liked to get all her household work over as soon as she could, otherwise there was hardly time in the morning to give Florence and Arthur their respective German lessons. Moreover, she had no jealousy of Florence. In fact, she rather liked her. She was confident in her own more perfect beauty, and, besides, she regarded Florence as a child. The youth and *petitesse* of the latter combined to foster the idea. So she felt no uneasiness in leaving her and the Englishman alone together.

One morning the two were, as usual, talking in an animated way, when Florence said with her usual simplicity :

“Do you know, Mr. Vaughan, you are the first Englishman I have ever met ?”

“Really, I am sorry you have not a better specimen to begin upon.”

“That is angling for a compliment, but I don’t intend to pay one.”

"I agree with you—truth before politeness."

"That is fishing still deeper, but I won't bite. I mean what I say, I have never met an Englishman before."

"Don't you have such things in New York? Hasn't Barnum at least a stuffed one in his museum?"

"I don't know; but the fact is, papa dislikes the English."

"I am sorry for that," said Arthur, half in earnest, half in irony. "Why is it?"

"O, it's a long story, but they call him in New York an Anglophobiatic. Once he let his house for six months, and put at the end of all his advertisements, 'No English need apply.' The fact is, we are a very obstinate family, and when we once get a notion into our heads, it takes a long time to get it out again."

"You are not singular in that," answered Arthur, sadly, thinking of his father's inflexibility. "Our family is distinguished for much the same quality."

"I hope you have not suffered from it?" exclaimed the young girl in a sweet, low,



sympathetic voice. She had remarked the involuntary sadness of Arthur's tone.

"If I have," answered the latter, ambiguously, "this suffering has at least saved me from greater." This he said, inasmuch as it was his father's inflexibility that had retarded his marriage with the *fiancée* whom he now so much disliked.

Florence tried to fathom the meaning of his answer. Intellectually it baffled her from its verbal ambiguity. But its deeper meaning she caught at once. Arthur had certainly suffered in some way, and she felt for him. And feeling for him, she could not but let some expression of this sympathy escape from her deep, earnest eyes. Arthur, however, hastened to turn the conversation from himself into its former channel.

"Pray tell me at least a part of the 'long story.' How comes your father to dislike us poor Englishmen so much?"

"The feeling is hereditary in our family. My great-grandfather, the son of an English squire, was treated very unjustly by his father—disinherited, I believe, merely because he made a love-match" (Arthur smiled

grimly) "and seems in return to have taken a hatred not only against his relations, but against his old country. Since then other grievances have occurred, but I forget exactly what they were. Papa will be sure to give you the whole account, if you ever meet him," she added, smiling.

"But surely, Miss Lovell, you don't share this antipathy?" asked Arthur, with an anxiety which he could not explain to himself.

"I hardly know. I always used to. But I don't dislike you at all."

"That is a comfort. One, at least, is spared out of twenty millions."

"Papa says," continued Florence, with 'the utmost *naïveté*, "that the English are always conceited, jealous, and disagreeable."

"Well, I know I am disagreeable; I dare say I am conceited; but I am pretty sure I am not jealous."

"That, too, may need only time to develop itself."

"You certainly were right, Miss Lovell, when you said you would pay no compliments. I have come to very bad waters for fish of that kind."

"How odd you are! Here we have known each other for I don't know how long—ten days at least, I should think—and we thoroughly understand each other, and all that. Now, what's the use of being friends if we can't speak freely to each other; if you must be always making round-about speeches to me, and I to you? Let us talk simply and sensibly. I thought you would like to know something [about my father. He's the dearest papa in the world, but he has some strong opinions, and that is one of them."

She spoke so naturally and confidentially, that Arthur positively revelled in the freshness of her nature. He bathed himself therein, as in some life-renovating dew.


"And does Mr. Borrodale share your father's views?"

"Partly, I guess. He don't go quite so far, perhaps. But you should hear him go on about the English."

"What does he say about me?" asked Arthur, smiling.

"I mustn't tell. Something tremendously complimentary, of course."

"I wish I could introduce you to some



more of my countrymen," said Arthur, "that you might be able to form an opinion for yourself. Perhaps, however, Bonn is hardly the best place to choose specimens."

"Why not?"

"Because it is said, you know, that a good many of the English are here, more because they find it inconvenient to live in England than because they find it pleasant to live at Bonn."

"And are you one?"

"Perhaps; but, to use your expression, 'I mustn't tell.'"

"I hope you don't owe money. Papa says all the English do."

"Then I must. That is logic."

"But is it fact?"

"No, certainly not. No one, I think, would trust me."

"I would, to any extent."

"Why?"

"Because I can see in your eyes that you are true!" And the young American bent on him a look which, in its simple earnestness and faith, was strong to dive into the innermost recesses of his heart. He did not quail

before it, for his was a pure and lofty nature, but he felt that it produced a strange effect upon him. Her look, her speech, the delicious sensation that he possessed her confidence unmanned him for the moment. But he had been early taught to disguise his emotions.

"I think I may say, without self-flattery, that you are right, Miss Lovell. I *am* true and I have given up much that I hold dear because I hold truth yet dearer. You remember, I daresay, what one of the cavalier-poets says :

"I could not love thee, dear, so much,  
Loved I not honour more."

"How I admire you !" exclaimed Florence, with such naïve earnestness that it quite disarmed the words of the sarcastic meaning they might have had upon the lips of another. "If there is one thing I admire it is self-sacrifice in the cause of truth. But do tell me all about it."

Arthur's pale face glowed at the commendation. Here was an opportunity to exalt himself to the hero in her eyes. The temptation to do so was great—he knew not why. But he determined to resist it, and inwardly blamed

himself for having uttered a word of self-praise.

“It is but little that I have done, and when all is said, what is it but one’s duty?”

“True ; but ‘duty nobly done is Providence forestalled,’” answered Florence, quoting an author little known either in America or England. “I only wish I could do mine. I long to be good ; I try to be good ; but somehow all one’s fine intentions melt away directly they are wanted. Do you think I am very wicked?”

Again there was a depth of earnestness in her tone, as she bent forward across the table and looked into Arthur’s eyes with her own, which deprived him of the slightest temptation to smile at the simple unconstraint of the question. On the contrary, as his dark eyes gazed upon her, and he noted all the world of precious meaning that lay in her glance, and the unsullied purity of the spirit that breathed forth in love-dimples over her face, he grew strangely enthusiastic in feeling, and answered hotly :

“Wicked ! You are goodness itself ! You are all that is——”

Florence looked quite shocked.

"I wanted an honest opinion," she said quite simply. "I did not think you would compliment me. Why cannot we be on confidential terms?"

On his side Arthur felt embarrassed. He had not meant to compliment. He had been driven by the force of an unwonted admiration into the expression of a strong opinion. And now it was difficult to carry on the conversation. Luckily at this juncture Herr Bonngart appeared. He opened a fresh conversation after his usual manner by asking, first, how they did, and secondly, how they had slept. These two questions he put every morning with a Mede-like invariability, but he was not very particular about the answers. This done, he enquired :

"Are you fond of music, Miss Lovell?"

"Very."

"Do you know there is a concert to-day in Kley's Garden? Would you like to go?"

"I should like to go extremely."

"And you also, Mr. Forn?"

"Certainly; I think it will be a very pleasant way of spending the afternoon."

“Then we will arrange to go,” said the old gentleman. “It begins at five.”

With that Herr Bonngart left the room, and both Arthur and Florence set to work. The former had by this time attained to no inconsiderable mastery over the German language, though he was by no means at the end of its difficulties. But Florence was at its very commencement ; and, like all ladies, she found it very hard to learn. As regarded, indeed, the mere speaking—round-about and involved though she thought it—she yet made rapid progress. Her quick and retentive ear caught and preserved the sounds, her excellent memory treasured up the words, and her instinct taught her how to employ them. But the work of more formal composition was a great effort to her. Knowing accurately the grammar of no language, she was suddenly confronted with all the intricacies of the most difficult of modern grammars. And it must be owned she was a little impatient under the novel task. Accustomed to think rapidly, and to dash down her thoughts in her own language with lightning speed and much natural eloquence, she did not relish the slow




and fettered progress of composition in a foreign one—and that one German. And it was here that Arthur, though not nominally her teacher, was of greater service to her than even Louise. His knowledge of the classics had necessarily involved a somewhat profound study of the principles of grammar—principles which in their nature apply to all languages alike—and he was thus enabled to explain to Florence much that would otherwise have baffled her, and to clear from her path not a few besetting difficulties. And if she was grateful for the help, it seems probable he was equally grateful for the opportunity. He knew not why he should care about it, but so he did. He knew not why it should be such a pleasure to him to sit by that slender form, to see the great eyes looking up into his with child-like trust in his superior wisdom, to feel sometimes the attar-like breath falling in faint, far-off pulsations on his cheek, to note sometimes a truant tress wandering in golden circlets on his arm and shoulder. In all her thoughts and ways Florence was a child. She was purely, simply natural. She was not pressed to the

earth, and fettered in every motion by a superincumbent mass of conventional ideas and usages. "Mrs. Grundy" was never before her eyes. She would have shocked any English dowager twenty times a day, and sent the most strong-minded of Lord High Chamberlains clean out of the few wits necessary for his office. And yet she never did or said anything that could have offended the most fastidious taste. Her essential purity, her sweetness of disposition, her exquisite tact and intuitive perception—in short, the whole great instinct of natural beauty of which face and form are but the outward signs—the inward grace of the mighty sacrament of Love and Truth—these preserved her in the perfection of really delicate and polite demeanour. But those in whom nature, with her essential code of manners, has been choked out by a spurious brood of mere arbitrary signs and passwords of conventionality, would (thank heaven !) have found much to criticise. For instance, Florence did not aim to reduce the English language within the smallest possible compass. She did not describe everything—men, horses, views, new potatoes, and

princes of the blood royal—by the one stereotyped young-ladies' word "charming." She did not devote much attention to her mode of entering a room, and had even been known to jump into a carriage. She invariably forgot to faint when a spider made his appearance on the table. And many other such-like sins she indulged in, the which, if laid before the dowagers of England in conclave assembled, would have made the hair of that august assemblage (false for the most part, though it be) stand on end with civilized horror and indignation.

But so benighted, or so corrupted by Bohemian influences, was Arthur, that he positively liked all this. It was to him a perpetual source of joy and sunshine to see so much grace and nature, unspoiled and unshackled by a harsh conventionality. Of stately dames and perfectly-bred inanities he had already seen enough, and more than enough. He used to say, "I should enjoy conversing with English ladies more than I do, if I did not always know beforehand exactly what remark they will make in answer to each of mine. Everything, from their religion to the holding



of their knives and forks, is a matter of regulation. Like the Scribes and Pharisees, they are the abject slaves of stereotyped 'traditions.' "

It will be seen from this that Arthur himself was a bit of a heretic—perverted from the stricter shibboleths of *Societyism*—and therefore disposed to welcome a sister heresiarch. But, as regarded himself, he had never, up to the present time, been able to shake off the dull incubus of his English training. Intensely true, genuine, natural, full-hearted, and affectionate himself, yet his manner was always more or less constrained. He never gave his feelings scope—he had been early taught to conceal them, and the habit remained long after the conviction of its propriety had disappeared. Perfectly polished and well-bred—nay, with something of that sort of distinction in his manner which one associates with the old *noblesse*—he had yet, at first sight, little about him that was soft and winning. Until very intimate with you, he never gave you an idea of the passionate warmth of his feelings, and the exquisite sensibility that actually preyed upon

his heart. And no one was more conscious of this reserve than himself. No one was more anxious to be as natural externally as he was internally. And no one so far could have been less successful. The silken fetters of boyhood had hardened into the iron gyves of manhood.

Thus it was that Florence's artless manner was to him almost like the discovery of America to Columbus. He had longed and hoped to meet such a being—and here, at last, she was. Like Columbus, he sprang eager upon the new-found soil, and made each day some fresh discovery. It was this, too, that had made him feel at once so thoroughly at home with her. Her nature was at bottom so completely in accord with his own, that with her, for the first time in his life, he found himself able to shake off, for a while at least, the ponderous burthen of his own artificial reserve. They were thrown constantly together, and the more Arthur saw of his fair young friend, the more did he feel that they shared a golden community of instinct and of feeling. Both alike were spiritual. Both moved through the world


---

with a passionate enjoyment of its beauty, but both felt also that there was a yet higher beauty within themselves. Truth and Loveliness—the one the sole object, the other the necessary form—these were the master-tokens stamped on the minds of each.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT.

IT was nearly a whole day since Iltudus Lessing had seen his English friend. They were by this time so intimate, and lived so close together, that Arthur was usually in his room many times a day, and such a sudden break became, therefore, almost unintelligible. But the little American had not been twenty years in the world, and nineteen in New York, without having cultivated the faculty of acuteness to some considerable extent. Something he guessed must be at the root of Arthur's absence, and that something no ordinary matter. It was not illness—had it been so he would have heard at once. Neither, for the same reason, was it a sudden journey. No, there must be some subtler, and less easily explicable, cause at work, and Lessing's curi-



osity was piqued to discover what this might be. Meanwhile, however, he would be patient. He would wait a day or two, when no doubt Arthur would come, and he would worm out the truth. But what should he do in the meanwhile? Not only from feelings of friendship, did he miss Arthur very much, but really, without him, he hardly knew now how to spend his time. He could not study Italian by himself, else (this was his own view of the case) he would leave Arthur too far behind, and there would be no interest in future in their studying together. Neither was there any one else with whom he cared very much to walk and talk. For a time he felt quite nonplused. At last a bright idea struck him. He would light a cigarette.

He did so, and disposed himself gracefully upon two chairs, that is to say, his body rested upon the seat of one, whilst his feet ornamented the back of another. It was a beautiful day, warm and fragrant, with a merciful sun. The window of his room was open, and he amused himself by looking out upon the street. As far as passers-by went, it was not much livelier than usual, but, in the opposite



house, there were unwonted signs of life. An English family occupied the *bel-étage*, but neither the mother nor her daughter could, in Lessing's judgment, lay claim to the same adjective as their apartments. But to-day there was a fresh face at the window, and one which commended itself much more to Lessing's taste. A young lady, with a very piquant hat, having a white bird's wing at the side, and with eyes still more piquant below it, lent quite a grace to the severely plain façade of the house. She was leaning half out of the window, under pretence of watering some plants, but not perhaps in utter unconsciousness of the presence of a good-looking young gentleman in a room opposite. At least so Lessing, with his usual good opinion of himself, was disposed to imagine. For his part, he was by no means desirous of remaining apparently uninterested. His feet would bear inspection, but he thought it politer to remove them to a lower level. And he contrived by slow degrees to get nearer to the window. At last he established himself at it, and cast some respectful glances towards the young lady. She was still at her window, but engaged in conversation with

some one inside the room. Once or twice, however, she turned round, and the more Lessing saw of her face the better he liked it. She was not a brilliant beauty, but she was decidedly pretty, and seemed to be amiability itself.

At any rate, to Lessing's mind, she was better worth studying than his cigarette, which he now threw away, out of compliment to her. Some one passing along the street picked it up. It was an organ man, who, to show his gratitude, began to give signs of an immediate performance. Lessing grew indignant at the prospect. Why should he have his sweet reverie so rudely disturbed? But what was he to do? Unfortunately Germany is not a free enough country to make it safe to shoot an organ man on the spot, and, to do the young American justice, he did not share in this supposed propensity of some of his countrymen. Suddenly a bright thought struck him. The man might be an Italian. If so, they could have a conversation, which would place him in the most favourable light as an accomplished linguist in the eyes of the young lady opposite. So, with an accent and a

politeness to which the poor musician was alike unaccustomed, he began—

*“E Ella Italiano, Signore?”*

*“Sì, Signore.”*

*“Donde viene Ella?”*

*“Vengo da Francoforte, Signore, e cammino a Colonia.”*

The young lady's attention had been attracted by the conversation. She looked towards the scene of it with an expression of amusement on her face. Lessing would have preferred one of admiration. However, he continued his catechism in Italian :

*“Where were you born?”*

*“In Piacenza, Signore.”*

*“And have you left Italy long?”*

*“Five years, Signore.”*

By this time two ladies were at the opposite window, and Lessing was beginning to feel himself rewarded for his superhuman efforts in speaking Italian. Unluckily he overheard the new-comer say in a stage whisper to the first : “What a bad accent he has !” He looked up. It was the ugly daughter of the lady of the house. Never had he felt more profoundly convinced of her

ugliness. Under the circumstances he did not care to pursue the conversation further. Of course his accent was good—of that he was quite sure—but why cast pearls before——. He stopped the thought. It was profanation to one of the figures at the window.

He threw the man a ten groschen piece, and bade him in German *begone*. His tone was so angry that neither of the ladies could forbear smiling.

“I suppose they can’t understand each other,” said the resident.

Lessing was furious. To have his Italian doubted in this way was almost unbearable. Luckily he overheard the younger lady say to her companion :

“I think, at any rate, it sounded very pretty.”

Lessing regretted he had not continued the conversation a little longer, especially as the two ladies now retired from the window. He began to speculate who this young and pretty visitor could be. Was she a resident in Bonn? Hardly, or he must have seen her before. Perhaps she was a new comer. In that case he might hope to see her again.

Just at this moment there was a knock at the door. "Come in," said Lessing. A lady, old, shrivelled, with the manner of a menagerie baboon, entered. This was Frau Hoffmann, the worthy wife of Lessing's landlord. Lessing sprang to his feet, bowed, and offered the old lady a chair. She had brought him a peace-offering of some fruit. They had had a domestic disagreement, and after one of these the good dame was sure to bring him some fruit. And certainly her presents were not without their effect. Fruit and sweetmeats were still a weakness with Lessing—almost as much as when he used to steal out of school to buy surreptitious pounds of candy. The offering having been handed over, and acknowledged with becoming gratitude, the old lady proceeded to confer a yet greater benefit. For the first time since he had been in the house Lessing began to show an interest in his neighbours opposite.

"Can you tell me," he asked, "the name of the English family that lives opposite?"

Frau Hoffmann, however, was not to be taken in so easily. Like all women, she was

intuitively sagacious in what related to love-making.

"You want to know, Herr Lessing, who that other young lady is?"

Lessing blushed. He had not yet got beyond this juvenile weakness. Having done so, he felt it was useless to attempt any defence. He pleaded guilty, and threw himself upon the mercy of the court.

"Well, I do rather want to know who she is," he allowed.

"As it happens, I can tell you. She is a young English lady, the daughter of a 'milor,' I believe, and is at school at Miss Ross's."

"You don't say so!" exclaimed Lessing. "I never heard my cousin speak of her."

"She has not been long here."

"Do you know her name?"

"Martin, I believe."

"And is she any relation of the people opposite?"

"No, I think not, but they are friends of the family. Besides, Miss Tomkins—the young lady who lives over the way—was herself at one time a pupil at Miss Ross's."

"A precious long time ago, I should fancy," said Lessing, in whose mind was still treasured her remark about his Italian — *spretæque injuria linguæ*.

"No, not so very long ago," answered Frau Hoffmann, who resisted on principle all attempts to add to a woman's age. It would certainly have had shocking consequences in her own case.

"Well, if she's not old," retorted Lessing, "all I can say is, she has made uncommon good use of her time, for she's ugly enough."

"How ungallant you are, Herr Lessing!"

"I don't see that. Politeness requires you to speak pleasantly *to* ladies, but not *of* them. If one did both, what would become of truth?"

"I never heard such shocking sentiments," returned Frau Hoffmann, laughing. "Henceforth we shall know what to think of your polite speeches."

"What?"

"That you make up for them by attacking us behind our backs."

"Indeed you wrong me. My remarks were

suggested only by Miss Tomkins, and, as I don't know her, surely I may abuse her."

The assumption was open to contradiction, but Frau Hoffmann did not care to get deeper into an encounter of wits. Though not stupid or ill-educated, she was no match for the clever American in a wordy strife, so she thought it judicious to declare that some household duty required her immediate presence. Left alone, Lessing pondered on her news, and came to the conclusion that it was news of a particularly pleasant description. He lit another cigarette, to help him to deliberate. This again led to another, and this to a third, and between cloud-land and dream-land the hours flew by unnoticed.

The young lady did not appear again at the window, neither did Lessing see her leave the house. In all probability she had taken her departure whilst he was having his conversation with Frau Hoffmann. But Lessing had seen enough of her to preserve a very pleasant recollection of a demure but pretty face, the demureness of which was contradicted by a pair of bright and roguish hazel eyes. This was quite enough to enable him, with



the help of his cigarettes, to spin romance-web after romance-web, in all of which the said eyes played a very distinguished rôle. Lessing's heart was eminently susceptible. Whilst still in tunics he had fallen a victim to a fair sorceress in a pinafore, who had crawled into his affections through the loop-hole of his equally susceptible stomach. A small and somewhat dirty stick of sugar candy had laid the boy-hero low. And now, at man's estate, he was almost equally defenceless. Though he might resist sugar candy, he surrendered at discretion to almost every pair of bright eyes that opened their battery upon him. More plastic material the little Love-God could never have desired.

Already in Bonn he had had two or three violent, though short-lived attachments. One to a young English tourist, who had left him lamenting after only three bright days of intercourse. Another to a countrywoman, who by ruthlessly nipping every exhibition of feeling in the bud, had at last succeeded in disgusting her admirer. And a third, perhaps the most dangerous of all, to a vivacious Putzhändlerinn, or milliner, who had shewn

anything but anxiety to disenchant or repulse him. In fact, so far had he gone on the path of sentimentality in this last case, that nothing but a very judicious and diplomatic interposition on the part of Arthur had saved him from becoming the life-long captive of the fair *modiste's* bow and spear.

And now he had been again overcome. He sat and pictured to himself the face and figure of his late *vis-à-vis*; her eyes seemed to have kindled a certain half-pleasurable, half-unsatisfactory feeling in his breast, the genesis and probable exodus of which his past experience forbade him to doubt. As the thin, faint smoke from his cigarette wreathed itself in graceful eddies around his head, the head itself began to partake of the confusion and revolution thus admirably symbolized. This was the mood for castle-building. Straightway rose high into the air of the future many a stately and picturesque mind-fabric—many a grand palace, which the *genie* Fancy built, like Aladdin's, instantaneously at his bidding, wherein he moved the ever-daring knight, and Miss Martin shone a queen of beauty. Or the scene was changed, and he came down

with thunder-gallop, a second Cid, to rescue some fair, unknown, and evil-entreated damosel—and lo ! the damosel was Miss Martin ! So fancy followed fancy in rapid succession ; all marked, however, by a strong family likeness ; all bearing the crown of successful heroism on their brow ; for, since the steed Imagination is each man's private property, it were indeed foolish to hammer him, like a hack, along the hard high-road of fact. Let him by all means canter while he may in the pleasant meads of a luxurious, if impossible, perfection. Come soon enough the tight rein and the hard bit, when the "heavy-weight" Life settles fairly into the saddle, and turns poor Rosinante's head towards the fences of an ever-darkening future.

At last Lessing roused himself from his reverie. He got up—he flung away his last cigarette—he looked at the time—it was half-past seven. Judging by appearances, he had spent a couple of hours very idly. Judging by the enormous work his imagination had done—the immense journeys he had made upon its back—the prodigious achievements he had performed by its aid—he had been

---

most industrious. The work of many heroic lifetimes had been compressed into the compass of two beggarly hours. He had built a St. Peter's of mental architecture in far fewer minutes than the material structure had taken years to erect. Altogether his afternoon performance had been a model of industry and perseverance.

The only question was, what should he do now? It was nearly supper-time. Like every one else at Bonn, the Hoffmanns took supper at eight, and Lessing usually shared this meal as well as dinner with them. He would stay in till then at any rate, and meanwhile he would read.

The reading was more nominal than real, even though it took the form of a most exciting and "sensational" novel. There was everything in it to stimulate the most jaded palate. In the very first chapter a hint was given of a probable suicide, which, if all went well, might rapidly supervene. Two chapters later a would-be murderer stepped upon the scene, but was interrupted by the special providence that keeps homicide for the third volume. Here, however, the horrors came

thick and fast. It positively rained murders and suicides. No mercy was shown to human life under any consideration. Extenuating circumstances were of no avail with the stern Draco of an author. A baronet was burnt in a church. Two villains fought each other with "six shooters" over an inn table, both succumbing in good time to the exigencies of the plot. A mother poisoned three children, and, not being able to poison a fourth (the heroine), swallowed the remainder of the decoction herself. In only one case was anything like a leaning exhibited towards the side of pity, and this unwonted tenderness may have been due principally to the high rank of the character. An earl's daughter was not executed, but her punishment was commuted into insanity for life. At the same time an enormous diamond, which had been the cause of most of the trouble, was carried into the wilds of Abyssinia by a romantic groom, who had eloped with his master's daughter. Here, indeed, the horrors came to an end, and the red light commenced for the final and invariable transformation-scene entitled, "Living happily ever afterwards."

It was, indeed, strange that, with such a book (and he was in the third volume), Lessing's thoughts should have wandered ; yet so undisciplined was his mind, that they did. He could not banish from his memory, even for an instant, the face he had seen at the window. In the most exciting passages a certain jaunty hat with a white feather kept intruding most incongruously. The great diamond itself lost its lustre by the side of two roguish eyes that memory would conjure up before his vision. It was most unfortunate. How was anyone to enjoy a suicide or revel in a murder under such circumstances ? He flung down the book in disgust. At the same moment the whole *valetaille* of the Hoffmann household, in the form of one rather dirty maid-of-all-work, knocked at the door and announced that supper was ready.

thick and fast. It positively rained murders and suicides. No mercy was shown to human life under any consideration. Exonerating circumstances were of no avail with the stern laws of an avenger. A baronet was burnt in a church. Two villains fought each other with "six shooters" over an inn table, both succumbing in good time to the exigencies of the gun. A mother poisoned three children, and not being able to poison a fourth (the heroine) swallowed the remainder of the dose and perished herself. In only one case was anything like a leaning exhibited towards the side of pity, and this unwarranted tenderness may have been the principally to the high rank of the character. An earl's daughter was not executed, but her punishment was commuted into insanity for life. It was quite an enormous change.

## CHAPTER XIV.

“DOLCE REGINA DELLA NOTTE !”

**A**MONGST other habits into which Arthur and Lessing had fallen, was one which deeply scandalized the families in which they respectively lived. It was this, namely, of taking regularly a nocturnal walk. And they took it not only for amusement, but also for health. They had discovered very early in their sojourn in Deutschland that a heavy German supper of hot calf's-cutlets, new bread, tea, and unlimited salad at eight P.M., was a meal which cried out in solemn attestation of the truth of the saw, which bids one “after supper walk a mile.” As to the Germans themselves, they seemed able to take in this ponderous cargo and retire to rest almost immediately without much present injury. But for want, it is to be supposed, of



sound stomach-training in early youth, Arthur and Lessing found this meal a fearful tax upon their digestive organs. It was absolutely necessary to take it, else they would have suffered equally from insufficient nourishment. And, as the German dinner usually takes place at half-past twelve, and nothing in the shape of a meal intervenes between this and supper at eight, with the exception of a cup of coffee at three, it may well be supposed that an English appetite was prepared to do justice to any viands at the evening repast. The consequence was, that hideous nightmares had made both of them their prey, until they had almost simultaneously devised this system of nocturnal perambulation in order to work off the baleful effects of the last meal. Nor were improved digestion and sounder sleep the only advantages that waited on what Lessing termed their new "institootion." They made it a rule to talk only Italian at this time, and though it must be confessed the experiment partook rather of the nature of the blind leading the blind, yet there is no doubt they acquired thereby some facility in the use of Italian phrases. From about nine till half-

past ten or eleven the two friends were in the habit of walking arm-in-arm beside the Rhine, or along the Coblenzerstrasse, or out into the country, talking, sometimes rather loudly, in "a tongue not understood of the people," and, probably, in many cases, not to be understood at all by any nation—not even by that whose vernacular it professed to be. There was something very charming in these moon-lit rambles. All was so calm and beautiful—one seemed to be admitted into the inner presence of Nature, and to hold confidential converse with her in these her hours of retirement. In the daytime it was as if they were with the crowd in her ante-chamber—now like favourites in her boudoir. And so the twain, but Arthur more especially, as gifted with a more poetic nature, loved intensely these nocturnal communings.

But by the Bonngarts and Hoffmanns of Bonn a very different view was taken. It seemed to them the acme of dissipation thus to sally forth every evening. What good purpose could any one have in so doing? Surely only those could love darkness whose deeds were evil. Some great mischief must

be on the *tapis*, or, even if this were not the case, the habit in itself was a patent and unendurable scandal.

"Talk of romance!" exclaimed Herr Bonngart, "it is we, the Germans, who have the best, if not the only, right to call ourselves romantic, and we do not find it necessary to comport ourselves in this way. No, no, it is a very spurious and suspicious kind of romance which must needs make such an exhibition of itself."

For once Frau Bonngart agreed with her spouse. According to her economic social theories, it was at best a waste of power for two young men to be wandering out beside a river, when they might be carrying on the great work of wife-hunting at home. She did not like Louise to be left. Such neglect showed coldness, and might lead to that worst of negative misfortunes in a matron's eyes—"nothing further." It was highly desirable that "something further" should, to use another of Lessing's phrases, "eventooate." But how could anything be reasonably expected so to "eventooate," when one of the necessary ingredients of the wished-for combination

banished himself from the scene of action during the most confidential hour of the day, when all drew closer together, and even an Englishman's reserve might be inclined to thaw a little?

Thus it was that high German society regarded the evening programme of Arthur and Lessing. Meanwhile, like many other much-abused people, they held on the "even tenor of their way," unconscious that in so doing they stank daily more and more in the nostrils of the natives. At last, however, there had come a night when Arthur failed to discharge his part of the programme. It was the night of the day when Lessing had seen the young English lady at the opposite window. According to all previous experience, Arthur should have come round to him about nine, tapped at his window with his stick, and they should then have gone forth together on their Italianising and scandalizing walk.

But nine o'clock came without bringing Arthur. A quarter of an hour's grace did the young American accord him, and then, being quite convinced that it was useless to

wait longer, he determined to sally forth alone.

It was a beautiful night. A clear moon swam overhead in pure, calm glory, bringing to Lessing's mind irresistibly Ben Jonson's lines—

"Queen and huntress, chaste and fair,  
Now the sun is laid to sleep,  
Seated in thy silver chair,  
State in wonted manner keep."

Half love-stricken as he was, he was himself in a fitting mood to frame a sonnet to the patron goddess of all lunatics. It is strange how lovers turn instinctively to the moon. In the case of ladies the phenomenon has indeed been uncharitably explained by the fact of there being a man in it, but no such explanation will account for the similar interest displayed by masculine love-patients. Alas! poor moon! Who is there who can lay his hand upon his heart and swear he has never chopped thee into fourteen poetic fragments, and then sewn thee together as a sonnet? Who can say he has not hunted thee through the mazes of an ode, or tried hard to make thy paleness blush beneath the passion of a blank verse apostrophe? O, much-enduring and long-suffering moon!

Luckily Lessing was not only half love-stricken but also half Italian-ambitious, and the two had a tendency to counteract each other. He wanted to serenade the moon, but he wanted also to do it in Italian. The consequence was, that he never got beyond the first line, and that one equally undistinguished for originality or harmony. It was, however, complimentary—

“Dolce regina della notte!”

What more could even the moon desire than such a tribute as this? It was only unfortunate that, do what he might, no rhyme would present itself to *notte*, so that he was compelled to leave unfinished—a mere incipient *torso*—what might otherwise have proved a fine lyric poem.

Frustrated in his poetical aspirations, Lessing began to think whither he should go. He did not much relish solitary walks, so he at once decided against the country and the river-side. He determined finally to walk towards the Coblenzerthor, and perhaps then to make his way into the town. Accordingly he lit a cigarette (when by himself, Lessing was a great smoker), and walked meditative to

wards his goal. When he reached the "Thor," or gate, he "concluded" (to use his own idiom) to return. The town did not look very attractive, and, besides, Lessing's was one of those sympathetic natures which can enjoy nothing by themselves. He was always more or less miserable without a companion.

He had not gone many steps on his homeward way, when he heard behind him a voice which seemed familiar to his ear. It appeared to be raised in an excited and somewhat troubled manner. Another gentler voice answered it from time to time, and seemed endeavouring to relieve the anxiety of the first speaker. Lessing insensibly slackened his pace, and allowed the two speakers to come up with him. Scarcely had they done so than the first exclaimed, in a very audible and much less anxious tone—

"I do believe that's Ilty! If so it's all right."

Lessing turned round at once, and saw his cousin from Miss Ross's establishment close behind him, in company with another young lady. Could he believe his eyes? There were

the jaunty little hat, the white feather, and the arch eyes, that had played such a conspicuous part in his afternoon reverie. He would have given worlds to have been able to act the finished man of the world. It was, however, impossible. He felt he was blushing. He knew that his heart was galloping, post-haste, along the road of excitement. Do what he might, his voice quavered. He displayed all the usual symptoms of bashfulness, and waxed every second tenfold more bashful, as the consciousness of the fact forced itself in upon him.

“O, I’m so glad we’ve met you !” exclaimed his cousin, apparently much relieved.

“The pleasure is on my side, Sophy,” answered Lessing with great difficulty. “But what on earth brings you here at this hour ?”

“Well, you mustn’t say anything about it, or Miss Ross would be very angry. We had permission to spend the day out, and we have been with Mrs. Brownlow, and the fact is, Annie Brownlow had to go off by the nine o’clock train, and we drove to the station with her for the fun of the thing, thinking, of course, we should find a carriage there to



come back, and lo-and-behold! when we came out of the station, after seeing her off, not only was our own carriage gone, but there was no other there—not a solitary one—so we have had to walk back. Fancy that!—to walk back through Bonn at this hour alone! What would Miss Ross say? And the people here have been so rude! you don't know. However, it's all right now; you'll escort us home, and Miss Ross will think we've come straight from Mrs. Brownlow's, and that we met you there. But really until I saw you I did not know what we should do. We couldn't find a *droschky* anywhere, not even at the Coblenzerthor."

"Why, you have had quite an adventure," said Lessing; thinking, at the same time, that he was equally lucky in that way. "I shall be delighted to escort you, though I don't quite understand how you got here on your way from the station to Miss Ross's. It's about as round-about a way as you could have chosen."

"Don't be suspicious, Ilty. Of course this isn't the direct way, I know that; but we went first to the Market Place to try to get a

*droschky* there, and then we thought we would try here, because it would never have done, you know, for us to have walked back to Miss Ross's alone, but, if we had gone in a carriage, she would naturally have concluded that Mrs. Brownlow had sent us home in it."

"I am sure your diplomacy does you great credit," said Lessing; "but," he added, in a whisper, to his cousin, "who is your friend? Pray introduce me."

"Certainly. Miss Martin, my cousin, Mr. Lessing."

Lessing took off his hat in his most finished manner. The young lady bowed, and Lessing fancied her eyes had rather a laughing expression. He could find nothing better to say than—

"I think we have met already, to-day, Miss Martin."

"Have we? I am sorry I don't remember it. Where?"

"In the Spinnerstrasse," answered Lessing, rather disappointed.

"Why, are you the gentleman who was talking Italian to an organ-man?"

"Yes," replied Lessing, more cheerfully.

"Do you do it often?" asked Miss Martin, not meaning to ridicule him, but simply by way of continuing the conversation. But the question jarred on Lessing's nerves.

"I do not quite understand you," he said.

"Do I do what, often?"

"I think I meant, converse with organ-men," answered Miss Martin, very demurely.

"No; of course, not often. In fact this was the first time, and I should not have spoken to the man to-day if he had not been an Italian."

"But surely you can't learn any Italian from poor creatures like that?"

"I do not want to learn any Italian from them," answered Lessing, loftily.

"You must know," interposed Lessing's cousin, who was aware of his weaknesses, and was by no means disposed to spare them—"you must know, Polly, that Mr. Lessing is a great linguist—a tremendous linguist. There is hardly a language under the sun that he don't know perfectly. You should see his great epic poem in Japanese. I can't understand it myself—in fact there is only one person in

Europe who can, and that's himself; but I am told by this person that it is wonderfully fine."

All this was gall and wormwood to poor Lessing. To be laughed at was, at any time, the thing that annoyed him most, but to be laughed at before Miss Martin was really beyond endurance.

"Sophy, how can you be so ridiculous?" he exclaimed, angrily.

"You mean 'complimentary.' Well, I never knew you have any difficulty in accepting a compliment before."

"It is not very often, that you give me any opportunity of accepting or declining one. Miss Martin," he continued, recovering his good temper, "the fact is, Sophy is jealous. She knows I speak German better than she does, though I have never had the advantage of Miss Ross's teaching." And then, with the frankness and impetuosity of one who had himself not very long been emancipated from school, he added—

"How do you like the old lady?"

"Pretty well," answered Miss Martin, more demurely than ever.

---

"That means not at all. Young ladies are always ready to go off into raptures if they like any one the least bit in the world."

Miss Martin laughed a little laugh, which showed that she thought there was some truth in the remark. Then she said—

"You should ask your cousin what *she* thinks of Miss Ross. I have been at the school such a very short time."

"May I ask how long?"

"About five weeks."

"But, surely, Miss Martin, it don't take you five weeks to tell whether a black draught is disagreeable."

"Don't make Miss Ross blacker than she is," interposed Sophy.

"Perhaps it is impossible," said Lessing. "It might prove to be 'wasteful and ridiculous excess.' For my part, I only know her by sight, but that's quite enough. She seemed to me a regular old cat in mittens."

"You are very disrespectful to our governess," said Sophy.

"Ah! I know you are one of those who won't let any one attack her but yourself: so please to begin."

"Certainly, she's rather cross," said Miss Martin.

"And absurdly particular!" exclaimed Sophy.

"And intensely suspicious," added Lessing.

"Ilty, you mustn't say a word. We are qualified to judge of her character, but you are not."

"Excuse me—you are interested witnesses. It is I alone who can speak with perfect impartiality."

Just at this moment they heard a sound as of singing not far in front of them, and in a few moments met a small band of students, walking, arm-in-arm, right across the road, and yelling out a bacchanalian song at the utmost pitch of their voices. The ladies shrunk on one side and Lessing followed them. But the students were in the mood for a frolic. They were in that delicious transition state between soberness and drunkenness—that Debatable Land of toppers—when all swims in false colours before the eyes, and the earth itself seems scarce large enough for the due exercise of wine-engendered energy. Inspired by a common impulse, the students extended

the barrier so as to render it impossible for any one to get past them. It was an awkward position for Lessing and his two charges. But Lessing was as bold as a lion and never calculated odds. His only annoyance was the thought that, do what he might, the scene must be disagreeable to the ladies. They were now upon the *trottoir*, and, raising his hat in his politest style, Lessing said in excellent German, to the student nearest the wall,

"Will you be good enough, sir, to let the ladies pass?"

"I'm afraid I cannot oblige you," hiccuped out the other.

The voice seemed not altogether unknown to Lessing, but it was so dark in the shadow of the high wall that he could not recognize the speaker.

"Again I ask you to let the ladies pass."

One or two of the band, who had never meant to make any serious obstruction, seconded this appeal, but the student at the end remained obstinate. Meanwhile the ladies were naturally much alarmed.

Lessing's decision was soon taken. The

student was by four or five inches the taller of the two, but Lessing at once levelled a blow with full force at his head. It had the desired effect. The young Silenus fell heavily to the ground, overcome, perhaps, as much by his previous potations as by Lessing's onslaught. His companions, sobered for the moment by the occurrence, did not seem disposed to take his part. Only, the one who had been next to him, stepped forward, and in vinous accents, but with much politeness, asked Lessing for his card. The latter gave it, and received one from his interrogator in return. The rest merely laughed at the whole occurrence. No further opposition was attempted, and Lessing, with his two fair charges, at once made their way forward, whilst his opponent still lay at full length upon the ground. Lessing had his reward immediately. Both the ladies were profuse in their thanks.

"Fancy your attacking them all!" exclaimed Miss Martin, enthusiastically.

"There was not much danger," answered Lessing. "They meant no mischief—only a little fun."



"I call it very ungentlemanly fun," said Sophy.

"Well, you can't expect these poor creatures to have the refinement of Americans," returned Lessing, with superb self-sufficiency. "They are comparatively uncivilized."

"Why did they want your card?" asked Miss Martin, with evident curiosity.

"As sticking-plaister for that gentleman's head, I suppose," answered Lessing, laughing.

"How can you say that! What does it mean, really?"

"Of course it means that they wanted to learn who had given them such a valuable lesson. Who knows! perhaps I may be made Professor of Pugilism, with a salary of eight hundred thalers."

Miss Martin seemed by no means satisfied with this answer.

"Why won't you tell me?" she asked, half-plaintively.

"I've given you two excellent reasons, surely you can't want a third!"

"I know what it is!" suddenly exclaimed the young lady, whilst a look of horror stole over her countenance, and, turning to Lessing,

she bent her hazel eyes upon his face. "You are going to fight a duel!"

"I have heard nothing about it," he answered, gaily. "When it comes off, do you wish to be present?"

"You shouldn't joke about such an awful thing! Is it true? Does the exchange of cards mean that, really?"

"What an imagination you have, Miss Martin!" answered Lessing, who was determined not to allow the possibility of such an occurrence to the young lady before it happened, though he would by no means have objected to her knowing all about it, had it been over.

"Well, I think you might as well tell me," continued Miss Martin, beginning to pout in a manner which, to Lessing, was almost irresistible.

Luckily for his firmness, they arrived nearly at the same moment at Miss Ross's house. Lessing pulled the bell, and, to his no small consternation, Miss Ross herself opened the door. The good lady peered out suspiciously into the darkness, until she made sure who the visitors were.

"Young ladies," she said, sternly, "you are very late—very late indeed."

"We were unexpectedly detained," answered Sophy, with delicious vagueness.

"How so, Miss Warren? I allowed you and Miss Martin to go out on the express understanding that you should be in by ten, and it is now nearly eleven."

"I am very sorry," said Sophy; "but really it was impossible to help it."

"To help what?"

"To help being so late."

Here Lessing struck in—

"I am sure, ma'am, the young ladies have done their best to be back in time. They have been walking as fast as possible."

But Miss Ross only noticed the interference so far as to allege another ground of complaint, which it apparently suggested.

"I thought you would have come home in some conveyance. It is hardly proper for young ladies to be walking about at this hour."

"I thought my cousin would be a sufficient escort," answered Sophy.

"Escort is stuff and nonsense!" retorted

Miss Ross, who was getting more and more angry. "You should have studied appearances. Really, I don't know what people will think of my establishment. However, I must have some conversation with you on this matter to-morrow, when I trust your explanation may be more satisfactory than it appears now." Then, turning to Lessing, she added, "We need not detain this young gentleman, I think. Good-night, sir."

Lessing's juvenile blood boiled at this supercilious treatment. However, he wished his cousin good-night, and took an almost equally affectionate farewell of Miss Martin, before the very face of the old lady, who looked daggers at him during the performance. Then he slowly sauntered homewards, now whistling, now singing, to relieve the tension of his sentiment-o'ercharged mind. Altogether the day had been a remarkable and eventful one. It had been, also, all things considered, one *Cressâ notâ notandus*, to be marked with the white chalk of happiness on the dull ground of ordinary life.

## CHAPTER XV.

### "THE OLD, OLD STORY."

FRAU BONNGART was not often in a very good humour, but both she and Louise were in this enviable condition on the evening on which the events related in the last chapter took place. For the first time for some weeks Arthur remained at home after supper. It seemed to them both a convincing proof that the society of Louise had grown even more attractive to him than before. And, if the mother was glad from a mere maternal and half business-like interest in her daughter's fortunes, how much more did the daughter herself rejoice. Ever on the look-out for the smallest indication of Arthur's sentiments, and disposed to attach undue importance to everything that could nourish her hopes, she could not help regard-

ing his sudden change of programme as a convincing proof of increasing interest on his part. It was by her he sat at supper. It was with her he chiefly talked. The sort of tacit agreement, to which they had all come, that only German should be spoken at meal-times, tended to throw the young American into the shade. Her acquaintance with the language did not enable her as yet to get beyond the most commonplace remarks, whilst Louise, speaking her own language with great skill, and in an unusually musical accent, made it serve as the vehicle for much brilliant conversation, which afforded Arthur an enjoyment he took no pains to conceal.

It was, therefore, not to be wondered at that Louise, noticing his rapt attention and his polite devotedness, should have been confirmed in the idea which for some time past had been gaining ground in her mind, that something more than friendship was springing up between them. Alas! as in too many cases, it was the wish alone that was the father of the thought. But at the thought a strange and exquisite thrill of pleasurable emotion shot through her frame, her bright

eyes shone more brightly, lit-up with the spark of nearer hope, and the beauty of her mind and body attained a yet more glorious pitch of perfection.

On this night in particular she shone even more than her wont in anecdote and repartee, and Florence, as she looked and listened, felt quite an enthusiasm for a creature possessing so much beauty and intelligence. As to Florence herself, she was singularly free from all feminine jealousy. It never occurred to her to set herself in competition with others. She was content always to do what she could for those about her, and to talk what came naturally into her mind, without ever straining after effect in either act or speech. Besides, she liked Louise. The latter had been kind to her, and that was always much with Florence. In reality this kindness had been at first (though now a personal element was mingled with it) little more than a part of the business-like programme, which Herr Bonngart imposed upon his daughters in their treatment of his so-called "guests;" but, as carried out by the young and beautiful Louise, it was far more attractive than the same pro-

gramme in the hands of the withered and spiteful Theresa. The latter, indeed, got more disagreeable from day to day, as her conviction deepened that there was some underhand plotting against her peace on the part of her sister and Arthur. She would have given all she possessed to unearth the latent mystery, but as yet she had been unsuccessful. Do what she might, she could never detect any very overt signs of matrimonial conspiracy, and yet she saw enough to be pretty sure that something of the kind must be on foot. This lent additional sourness to her temper, but at the same time increased her vigilance. It should never be said that through any neglect on her part, her sister had won a triumph; no effort should be wanting to prevent that ultimate and worst miscarriage of natural justice, which takes place when a younger sister is married before an elder.

And so the life whirligig went round, each performer spurring on his hobby in frantic exertions to overtake his neighbour, and none having much right to boast of his success. But what was Arthur's hobby? Had you asked him, he would boldly and, as he fancied,



truly have said, "none," but every now and then the glance he threw across the table to where Florence sat, radiant with vivacity and artlessness, told a tale which he himself was not conscious he was helping to compose.

The supper-party consisted of its usual elements, except that Theodore was absent.

"Where's Theodore?" asked Herr Bonngart, as they took their seats.

"He has a very particular engagement this evening," answered his mother.

"I wish he'd get his 'particular engagements' over in the day-time," growled Herr Bonngart suspiciously.

This was before Arthur had signified his intention of not going out that evening, and was intended as much as a hint to him as a grumble against the absentee. He waited until supper was over, and then made the proposal:

"Why shouldn't we sit in the garden a little this evening? It is such a beautiful night, so warm and clear and bright. It is really too fine to stay in-doors."

"But you have to take your usual walk, I

suppose," said Frau Bonngart, in a harsh, disagreeable tone of voice.

"O, that is not absolutely necessary. My present plan will be still pleasanter."

"I think it will be delightful!" exclaimed Florence.

"So do I," echoed Louise.

"I am sure it must be very damp," croaked Theresa. "It always is after such a warm day as we've had."

"Are you afraid of rheumatism?" asked Louise, a little maliciously, for in Germany this is considered the complaint of elderly people.

"Not more than you need be of heart-ache," retorted Theresa.

"Well, by all means go," said Frau Bonngart maternally. "You'll excuse my coming, as I must go to bed almost immediately. This warm weather tries me so."

"And you'll excuse me too," grunted Herr Bonngart. "I have the paper to read. Where are my spectacles?"

This was an invariable question after supper, and sometimes great delay occurred before these necessary articles could be found. In

this case, however, they presented themselves almost immediately, and were soon discharging their usual function.

Herr Bonngart's garden was both larger and prettier than the appearance of his house led you to expect. Those who know the Coblenzerstrasse will remember that behind many of the houses lie long strips of garden whence a beautiful view of the Rhine-scenery may be obtained. Such a strip, only larger than that of his neighbours, was Herr Bonngart's garden. A gravel walk ran all round it, fringed with various small trees, whilst in the middle was soft, fresh grass.

The ladies needed no preparation for their garden walk. In company with Arthur they sauntered round and round, now admiring the moon-lit landscape, now talking merrily. Florence was, however, unwontedly quiet. Any such season of tranquillity, or scene of beauty, impressed her powerfully—almost painfully. It sometimes seemed to her as if it were profanation to speak above a whisper in this the slumber-time of Nature. Arthur knew instinctively what her feelings were, and rejoiced to note this community of sentiment

between them. But Louise, with all her beauty, all her cleverness, and all her amiability, had not much genuine poetry in her composition. As Wordsworth sung of another, a primrose on the river's brim was always a primrose to her, and never aught beside. And, if Göthe were sincere when he said, "that he counted him a happy man, who could see the leaves falling from the trees and think only that winter was approaching," he must have given Louise a very high place in his roll of happy worthies. The solemn presence of the night did not cast the same spell upon her as upon the other two. It bound her high spirits in no chain of sober thought. And so she laughed and chatted in a way which, though it had seemed most appropriate at the supper-table, jarred a little on the nerves of both Arthur and Florence as they walked in the pale glimmer of the moon.

Presently Herr Bonngart came out to them. "I want you girls in the house," he said, mysteriously, to his daughters. The "girls" went wondering what could have happened to require their presence.

"We need not go in," said Arthur to Flo-

rence ; "in fact, we should only be in the way if we did."

"I would much rather stay out," she answered simply.

They took another turn round the garden. At the further end was a door which led out into a meadow sloping down towards the riverside. It caught Florence's eye :

"Why should we cramp ourselves up within these four walls ?" she exclaimed. "Above all things, I like to feel free. Let us go for a stroll outside."

Arthur was an Englishman, and the proposition startled him for the moment. At the next he blushed to find himself still so much the slave of conventionality. However, he took refuge in what seemed to him a safe middle-expedient.

"Had we not better wait until the others come back ?"

"O, certainly, if you think they would like to join us, but I don't fancy they will care to go beyond the garden."

Arthur thought the same. The staid daughters of Herr Bonngart were not likely

to be found roaming over the meadows by moonlight.

"Suppose we go," said Florence, wondering at his hesitation.

It was consideration for her alone that made him hesitate. He would not have her appear in other than the most decorous light in the eyes of these heavy German respectabilities. For himself, he would have liked the walk, and for the life of him he could see no harm in it. But his chivalrous nature would have led him to prefer to appear a spoil-sport rather than to sanction anything which might hereafter be misconstrued. Only, what was he to do? Florence was evidently eager for the walk, and, in her childlike impulsiveness and innocence, could imagine no possible objection to it. *Panta men kathara tois katharois.* Her great eyes rested inquiringly upon his face. What was he to say? He could not tell her why he thought they had better remain where they were, so he remained silent.

"Well," asked Florence, after a pause, "won't you come? Are you going to refuse me such a slight request?"

"I would come with the greatest pleasure, but——"

"Stop there!" she exclaimed, laughing. "You can always stop when you reach a 'but.' Every one knows what's coming then. Well, I wanted a companion. However, if you won't come, I guess I must go by myself."

"This," thought Arthur, "will never do. I must go with her. I'll come," he said, aloud, "but I think we had better not go far."

"Why not? Are there any wolves about?"

"Only those in sheep's clothing."

"That means gentlemen, I suppose—at least, it is they who dress in wool. However, as the expedition evidently strikes you as something very awful, I must not joke."

Arthur opened the door, and they stepped out into the meadow.

"Now one breathes freely," exclaimed the young scion of the New World. "How I hate being 'cabined, cribbed, confined!' At the best, everything in Europe seems small and cramped compared with America, but to be forced to pace round and round a garden is quite oppressive."

"I wonder you can ever endure a room, then, for that is still smaller."

"I only do so because I'm obliged. I would always be in the open air if it were possible. It is trees and flowers and brooks and birds that I love, not arm-chairs, music-stools, tables and sofas."


"You are like the Douglas of old, who 'loved better to hear the lark sing than the mouse squeak.' But I should think everyone agreed with you, at least in theory."

"I fancy people think more of comfort than of beauty, else why should everything in an ordinary house be so ugly as it is?"

"Much of that is hereditary," answered Arthur. "Things must at first be invented in the simplest forms, and then this form is handed down from generation to generation as the model beyond which no one aspires; but I, for one, believe that there is more beauty in the mind than the work of the hand would seem to indicate."

"What is beauty?" asked Florence, suddenly.

"The very question that has puzzled philosophers in all ages. Aristotle, Longinus,





Schiller, Burke, and many others have tried to solve the problem ; but it is useless to wrangle about it. You cannot *say* what beauty is, but you can *feel* it."

"But then what different feelings different people have on the subject. There are some who think Aunt Letty a beauty !"

"Certainly, that is necessary. The question is purely—pardon the heavy word—subjective. It is after all a sense, and not an external reality, and this sense is no doubt dependent largely for its enjoyment upon the association of ideas."

"I am afraid I do not quite understand you," said Florence.

"And I am afraid I do not quite understand myself," answered Arthur, laughing. "I must dive a little deeper into German metaphysics, before I shall be competent to lecture on such subjects."

"What a pity it is that thoughts are so difficult !" sighed Florence.

"They do not make or mar our happiness," answered Arthur.

"What does ?"

"Our feelings."

"But are not the feelings themselves our happiness or unhappiness?"

"Possibly not," answered Arthur. "True, we could not be happy or unhappy without them, but that only proves that they are necessary instruments. You cannot write without a pen, but the pen is not the writing."

"Well, I am very happy!" said Florence.

Arthur looked at her as she spoke, and saw the truth of her words manifest in every feature. Her face was slightly upturned, as if in enthusiastic adoration of the loveliness of the cloudless sky. The pale moonbeams fell full upon it, investing with a more than mortal refinement a countenance always so delicate and spiritual. The large eyes, so wonderful in their varying wealth of expression, enthroned now a soft and pensive radiancy. Down her shoulders, just stirred into a tender motion by the faint western breeze, rippled her luxuriant hair. For the moment he stood transfixed. The vision was, to him at least, one of the most exceeding beauty. She seemed like some elfin sprite,



some fay from the Land of Wonder—something all

"Too bright and good  
For human nature's daily food."

And then Arthur's very heart-strings were touched by the simple expression of her happiness. "I am very happy." With what a strange sensation did the few words inspire him! Here was one on whom the seal of sorrow had not been set. It was something to know and see such an one. Life was with her a garden, whilst with him it was already a cemetery. She only gathered flowers, whilst his soul walked sorrowful amidst the tombs of departed joys. There was in the contrast and in the present connection between himself and the lovely girl, that strange, luxurious bitter-sweetness of sentiment, which seasons so gratefully the insipid draught of a disappointed life. He felt he knew not how. The place, the time, the scene—all combined to throw a wizard glamour over his thoughts. A strong, tumultuous tide of emotion swept over his unresisting soul, and hurried him on towards a precipice. His usually calm, clear judgment was for the moment dethroned.

He knew not much, but this kept echoing in the secret places of his soul—"She is happy, I am unhappy!" Could not these two poles of existence, the great positive, and the great negative, be brought into relation, and what might not be the result? Would it not be such an electric shock of joy, as should sweep before it all the unhappiness of the past? The experiences of a lifetime gathered into focus in a moment. His former sighs, and tears, and sufferings, and calamities seemed all at once to be seething in some Medea-cauldron, whence a new life, young and vigorous, should emerge. An instant later, and it was done. The travail-agony was over, and the name of the new-born passion was—LOVE!


It was a moment both of pain and of trial, this moment of the genesis of Love. For the strong man's higher will was powerless, and his heart's citadel in possession of a tumultuous throng of desperate suggestions. How should he declare his passion—far more, how should he relieve his wildly-throbbing heart of its intensity of feeling? It seemed as though his brain must burst, or his heart-

strings crack beneath the supreme strain, if he said or did nothing. As Florence stood there, heeding him not in her own rapt admiration of the scene, he was minded to clasp her in his arms and pour forth the burning lava of his feelings in a thousand passionate caresses. It was but for the tithe of a second he thus thought. Then his iron will re-asserted its dominion, and, pale from the recent conflict, but still once more calm and collected, Arthur stood beside his fair companion.

She had seen nothing—suspected nothing. A great battle had been fought—a mighty revolution had convulsed a brother soul—within a yard of her, and she had been all unconscious of the fact. O, what is the imperviousness of bricks and mortar compared with that of flesh and blood !

She did not seem disposed to break the silence. The glory of the night was still weaving its solemn spell over her impressionable mind. They walked on a little way without speaking, and Arthur had time to arrange his thoughts and take his resolution. And here the nobility of his nature asserted itself.

Though writhing in the grasp of a new passion, he thought only of Florence, not of himself. It was, indeed, a bright and blessed prospect that had flashed in for the moment upon his imagination—a glimpse of the beatific vision accorded to some wandering, melancholy Peri. But he would not be the one to mar the harmony of that young life. It was not likely that she should ever care for him, so much older than herself as he was. Why, then, should he vex and harass her with a selfish importunity? Besides, was there not another reason, known only to himself, that forbade the attempt? Was he not tied and bound by a solemn engagement from which he saw no prospect of escape? Yes; his resolution was taken, and he would abide by it. He would conceal, if he could, not eradicate, his affection. He would be to her all that a brother could. He would watch over, protect, and, if it were necessary, guide her. More than this, it would be selfish to aim at doing. For Arthur's love was of that great, genuine sort, (so uncommon, among men at least, that few will even believe in its existence), which embalms the beloved object with



the costly myrrh and spikenard of self-sacrifice and endurance.

It was he who was the first to break the silence. His heart still throbbed so violently that it could not but be that his voice should tremble somewhat, but not so much so as that Florence should notice it.

"I do not wonder," he said, "that we should be silent. On a night like this there is more meaning in silence than in words."

"I was thinking," answered Florence, dreamily, "how strange it is that we know so little of the universe. What does one know about the moon, for instance? Here is the earth, and there the moon—not so very far apart—forming portions of one great system, and yet we do not even know if the moon is inhabited."

" 'How little we know' must be the burden of the 'psalm of life,' " said Arthur. "But how much there is taking place hourly at our door, of which we know and guess nothing." This he said, thinking of the storm that had just swept over his own being, and of which Florence was still in perfect ignorance.

Florence turned round and looked at him.

He was deadly pale, and the cold shimmer of the moon lent an additional ghastliness to his features. She little guessed the cause, but her tender heart was touched at once. With her usual impulsiveness, she came quite close to him, and laid her fairy hand upon his arm, whilst she looked up compassionately into his face.

"You are ill," she said. "I am so sorry. Let us go back to the house."

"No, no," answered Arthur, making a desperate effort, and smiling painfully, "I am not ill, thank you. But perhaps we had better be returning."

They made their way homewards. Out of pure sympathy, and some idea of guiding his footsteps, should he be unwell, Florence kept her hand within his arm. The touch sent strange electric thrills of indescribable emotion through Arthur's frame. It was with the utmost difficulty he could command his steps or rule his rebellious voice. He would have been glad if the distance had been a hundred-fold as great, and yet was not sorry when it had all been traversed, for he himself felt that the mental tension was almost more than he could bear.



---

They reached the house. Herr Bonngart, his wife, and Theresa, were in the sitting-room, but Louise was absent. An uncomfortable air of mystery seemed to envelope them. Arthur was too well-bred to make any inquiry, but he felt convinced that something disagreeable had occurred. No information was vouchsafed, however, and, after a little ill-maintained conversation, the party broke up to retire for the night.

Arthur and Florence went upstairs together. At the door of her room he shook hands with her, as was his custom, and wished her good-night. How his heart palpitated at the touch !

## CHAPTER XVI.

### FONS ET ORIGO.

IT was true that a disagreeable incident had occurred, and it was not long before Arthur learnt something about it. The main facts, or rather what Herr Bonngart deemed it judicious to promulgate as such, reached him the next day at dinner, when in the innocence of his heart he inquired for Theodore.

"I am sorry to say he has met with an accident," answered Herr Bonngart, "and is obliged to remain in bed."

"An accident! Not a serious one, I hope?"

"Not very. But last night as he was coming home, after attending a meeting of the Belletristic Club, he was attacked by a drunken man in the street, and received an awkward blow on the head."

"I am very sorry to hear it," said Arthur. "Is a doctor attending him?"

"O, it's not so bad as all that," answered Herr Bonngart, who was much too thrifty to call in a doctor except in the most extreme emergency.

"I must go and see him after dinner," said Arthur. "It is so dull to have to remain a prisoner all day."

Herr Bonngart did not seem much to approve of the proposed visit, but could not well interpose to prevent it. Accordingly, immediately after dinner Arthur betook himself to the bedside of the patient.

In many respects Theodore's rooms were the most comfortable in the house. They consisted of a bedroom and study *en suite* on the *bel-étage*, and were both large, lofty, and well-furnished apartments. As the only son and as a student, of whose abilities and future success both father and mother entertained the highest opinion and hope, he was treated with much consideration.

Arthur found the patient in bed, with his head tied up in a bandage, and looking altogether very ghastly and uncomfortable. There was, too, a peculiar look about the eyes which suggested inevitably to Arthur, as a man who had himself seen something of university life,

that the drunkenness had not perhaps been altogether upon the side of Theodore's assailant.

"Very sorry to hear you're seedy, old fellow," said Arthur, in *Studentendeutsch*.

"Yes, it's very annoying," growled the gentleman in bed, adding a strong expletive.

"You're not in much pain, I hope?"

"A good deal. My head aches like anything."

"Ah, that will soon get better with cold water bandages. But tell us, how did it all happen?"

Theodore coloured. This was rather an awkward question, for, to say the truth, his ideas on the subject were, for a certain very sufficient reason, of the vaguest; but he put a bold face on matters, and said sharply:


"I was taken quite unawares. A great, hulking giant of a fellow knocked me down before I had time to defend myself, and when I recovered my senses, he was gone."

"But what was the occasion?"

"I suppose he must have been drunk. I don't know."

"Drunken men are not generally so successful in their blows."

"I know nothing more about it," said Theo-



dore, sulkily. "But you might knock anyone down, if you took him unawares."

"Have you communicated with the police? Such an unprovoked assault should not pass unnoticed."

"No, not yet."

"Shall I do it for you?"

"O, pray don't. Our police make such a fuss. I should be bothered out of my life by them."

"Well, I trust you will soon be better. Is there anything I can do for you?"

"No, nothing. I think I'll try to get a little sleep."

Arthur withdrew, having come to the conclusion in his own mind that the received version of the transaction of the preceding night was, in point of historical truth, on a par with the French accounts of the battle of Waterloo. However, he was not specially interested in discovering the real facts of the case, so, for the time, he dismissed the subject from his mind.

He went to his own room. The recollection of the great moral crisis through which he had passed the night before haunted unceasingly his mind. He had gained a victory

over himself, but it was a victory purchased at a prodigal expenditure of his heart's best treasure. He had taken a resolution which he felt to be the right one, and which, once taken, it was not in his nature to dream of breaking, but it was a resolution which needed every possible effort to enable him to keep. How should he nerve himself to the requisite endurance? One way—a hard one—occurred to him. He would do what he had not done for years; he would read the letters Miss Claxton had formerly addressed to him. By thus bringing most vividly before himself his former weakness and the indelibility of the pledge that bound him, he might best arm himself with strength for the present conflict.

He went to his desk. He unlocked it and drew out the delicate packet. He opened the first letter and read it. How well it was written! He seemed now to be able to detect that there was not much nature in it, but there was certainly the most consummate art. The style was as tender and refined as the tint of the paper was subdued, and the sentiment was as chaste and subtle as the perfume which

still clung to the treacherous pages. It was a masterpiece of taste and talent, and the imitation of feeling was excellent. Even now he hardly wondered that he had been deceived.

With desperate determination he read all the letters. From among them, unnoted by him, there dropped a paper in his own handwriting. It was a copy of some verses he had formerly addressed to Louise Claxton, in the exuberance of his dawning love. The lines were headed "TO LOUISE," and described her with the pardonable exaggeration of a lover. They had been written before his engagement and contained a reference to a passion which was as yet concealed, but which could not, so the poet averred, remain concealed much longer.

Such were the lines that, impelled by some unconscious motion of Arthur's arm, came out of their long confinement, and fluttered forth upon the behests of fate.

How long Arthur sat buried in thought, he knew not, but at last, roused by the sound of voices, he thrust the letters again into his desk, re-locked it carefully, and went downstairs.

There he found Louise, waiting to give

him his lesson, which she had had no time to give in the morning. Her first question was :

"Well, how did you like your walk last night?"

"Very much, thank you. And you?"

"O, I mean, after Theresa and I left you?"

Arthur looked sharply at her, hoping to discover from the expression of her face whether she knew of the ramble in the meadow. But he was baffled. He could detect no under-current of meaning in her countenance. He answered laughingly :

"What do you expect me to say? I always enjoy being out in the moonlight. It was a pity you could not remain," he added with more gallantry than truth.

Louise smiled and said gaily :

"I hope, at any rate, you are in a good mood for work. I feel as if I could do wonders in that way."

"And I too," answered Arthur. "But really one never seems to get much nearer the end of your too-copious language."

"Well, and isn't even that sensation better than feeling, like Alexander, that you have no more worlds to conquer?"



“I don’t know. An existing thing at which you can’t get, and a non-existing thing, seem to me much the same. No tin kettle, and a tin kettle at the bottom of the sea, are almost equally serviceable for the purpose of making water boil.”

“But, if you learn contentment, you will not grumble at either.”

“That is, if you can do without food, you will not mind starvation. But unfortunately you can’t.”

“Well, at least you can be industrious, and begin your work,” said Louise, with arch imperiousness.

They commenced their reading, but they were not suffered to continue it long without interruption. A tap was heard at the door, and Gretchen, bare-armed and dust-besmeared, beckoned Louise out of the room. She went downstairs. Her father and mother were in the dining-room, and the former held an open letter in his hand.

“We have just had bad news,” said Herr Bonngart.

“What is it, papa?” asked Louise, frightened at his manner.

"Your Aunt Julie is very ill."

"I am very sorry to hear it," said Louise, a little relieved. Aunt Julie was her mother's sister, and was richly endowed with similar infirmities of manner and temper.

"She wishes you to go to her," continued Herr Bonngart. "She has no relation or friend with her, only a servant."

This came like a thunder-clap upon Louise. At any time she would have disliked the mission: now, however, it was trebly distasteful. But she was too much accustomed to obey her parents implicitly to dream of offering any opposition. She only ventured to ask,—

"Is it absolutely necessary?"

"Absolutely," answered Herr Bonngart, in a decided tone.

Possibly the necessity might not have been quite so absolute had not Aunt Julie been a rich widow, who had the sole disposition of her property. Herr Bonngart seldom lost sight of what Americans call "the main chance."

"Would not Theresa nurse Aunt Julie better?" asked Louise, timidly.

"Certainly not ; Theresa requires nursing herself, or at least fancies she does. The mother is too ill to go : I should be useless. There is no one suitable but yourself ; besides, your aunt specially asks for you."

Louise sighed at the inevitability of her fate. "When must I go ?" she inquired, plaintively.

"No time should be lost. You should start, if possible, by the very next train, which leaves, I think, at three. So pray go at once and get ready. Gretchen will help you to pack."

Louise withdrew. Her mother had said nothing during the interview. She had quite understood the secret current of her daughter's thoughts, and had half-agreed with her that it was a pity she should go. But it was one of the maxims of her statecraft never to interfere seriously unless she had quite made up her own mind, and was determined to carry out her own view at any cost. It was this which gave her such an advantage over her husband, who was always ready to contradict in words, even when he agreed at heart, and who thus laid himself open to

discomfiture and humiliation. But in this case Frau Bonngart could herself arrive at no decision. So much was to be said on both sides. She therefore let her husband have the unwonted luxury of deciding. When, however, Louise had left the room, Frau Bonngart thought it well to ventilate the subject a little more. She did so, however, cautiously :

"It is very difficult to spare Louise just now."

"Difficult or not difficult," answered her spouse with unusual temerity, for the recent exercise of power had inflated his self-importance ; "difficult or not difficult, it must be done."

"Do you think it so very essential ? Could we not say that we are very sorry, but really that we find it impossible to spare her ?"

"And lose thirty thousand thalers ! Think of that ! Thirty thousand thalers !" answered Herr Bonngart, inspired by the ideal contemplation of the money.

"Nonsense ! we should not lose it. Who else is there to whom it could go ?"

"Anyone : the servant, the lawyer, the

doctor. Pray let us be cautious. Besides, she is your sister."

"Stuff! You know we have always hated each other."

"But still, for the sake of appearances—"

"Well, well, I suppose somebody must go, and there is no one but Louise. But, I repeat, it is for many reasons unfortunate."

"I cannot see that."

"O, men never can. I sometimes wonder what they have eyes for. They certainly never use them."

"And women are always fancying they see things which don't exist," answered Herr Bonngart, with fresh audacity.

His wife crushed him with a look of contempt, which was more significant than any retort.

"Hadn't you better order the *droschky* for Louise?" she asked, in a tone of icy disdain. It said plainly enough, "You are good enough to fetch and carry, but not worth the trouble of arguing with."

This treatment had the desired effect upon the patient. He muttered a submissive

"Yes," and left the room crestfallen and humiliated.

Meanwhile, with a heavy heart, Louise had gone up-stairs. She turned towards the little room where Arthur was still awaiting her. As she was about to enter, she saw Gretchen emerging from the Englishman's bed-room. The industrious girl had taken this opportunity of sweeping it, and, as it was one of her principles that all foreign substances found on the floor were to be removed without mercy, it was not a matter of wonder that Arthur's fateful verses should decorate the top of the dust-pan, where the paper fluttered in a position of extreme insecurity. And Gretchen, as a mere blind agent of fate, took no pains to steady it. As to Louise, her heart was too full even to notice it. She turned with an unsteady step into the little room.

"I am very sorry to have kept you waiting so long," she said, "but I could not help it. And I am still more sorry that I cannot finish the lesson with you to-day."

"Why, what has happened?" asked Arthur, looking up in surprise.

"My aunt is very ill, and I am summoned to her at once."

"Dear me! I am so sorry." And Arthur's face assumed an expression of much sympathy.

The girl looked at him for a second. Was this sympathy purely personal with *her*, because a trouble had come upon her, or was it rather compassion for the patient? It seemed to be the former. She could not help, with a woman's art, probing it a little.

"It is a great trial to me," she said, meaning her enforced departure, but intending Arthur to understand her aunt's illness. He did so understand her, and in a moment his generous heart beat quicker at the knowledge that she was suffering. He approached her.

"I cannot tell you how I feel for you," he murmured, in a soft and half-tremulous voice. "Would that I could say or do something to comfort you."

The tone, the movement, the words, all full of a deep pathos, affected Louise irresistibly. There was something so devoted and so genuine in Arthur's nature, that when he

gave vent to his feelings, he could not always restrain them within the icy bounds of a few commonplace condolence-phrases. Both his words and his tones were apt at these times to partake of a fervour which misled people all the more because it was so opposed to his ordinary self-contained demeanour.

So it was on the present occasion. To one like Louise, who had long been watching for any and every sign of tenderness towards her, his conduct could not but seem something more than ordinarily sympathetic. Like a great flood rushed over her the instantaneous conviction, on the verge of which she had been hesitating so long. "He loves me." The effect was overwhelming. A dubious past rushed back upon her recollection, in which now every eventful mountain was gilded with the risen sun of certainty. The golden gates of a thrice-glorious futurity opened themselves before her vision. Above all the delicious present swam in warm glory before her dazzled gaze. What wonder that she could not control her emotions? What wonder that the throbbing heart made her gasp for breath? What wonder that her sudden feelings, finding



no other outlet, condensed themselves into tears—each tear an incarnate joy ?

Arthur was at once surprised and touched. How tender must be the heart, he thought, which thus suffers because a relation is ill ; a relation, too, of whom she cannot have known much, for I have never even heard of her. Poor girl !

Pity is akin to love, but it was not love, but the purest brotherly compassion, which induced Arthur to approach yet nearer to the sobbing girl, to take her hand gently in his own, to whisper into her ear soft eloquent words of sympathy and kindness.

“ Miss Bonngart,” he said—“ Louise, do not distress yourself so. You do not know how much I feel for you.”

It was true. He had been thrown much with her, and their acquaintanceship had ripened into a familiar intimacy. It did cause his sensitive heart no small pain to see her suffering thus ; but, still rapt in the tumultuous joy of her fancied discovery, she could not answer him ; she could only weep on and listen.

Arthur grew himself more and more over-

come. He could not bear to see her thus. She seemed to heed him not. How should he prove his sympathy, and rouse her from her sorrows? His own feelings overmastered him. He thought not what he did. He thought only that she was suffering, and that it was his duty to comfort and support her. In their long intimacy he had come to regard her almost as a sister. Impulsively, and meaning nothing by the act beyond the purest sympathy, he gently took her hand and raised it to his lips. She seemed to shudder at the touch, but, could he have seen her heart, he would have known it was a thrill of ecstasy.

"Louise, dear Louise," he said, "pray let me console you. I cannot bear to see you thus—I love you too much——"

He would have added some commonplace, which would have robbed the words of their supreme significance, but Louise gave him no time. Making a violent effort, she at last recovered herself. With eyes in which the soul-light flashed, rainbow-like, through her tears, she gave him one grateful look.

"You *have* consoled me," she murmured. "Thank you!"

So saying she left the room. It was with difficulty she did so, for her agitated feelings permitted her but a faint control over her body. Stooping with physical weakness, she tottered along the passage. On her way a paper caught her eye. Impelled by the instinct of neatness, that was habitual to her, she bent down mechanically and picked it up. She was already crumpling it in her hand, when her own name written in large letters at the top arrested her attention. What! her own name, and in *his* handwriting? It must be meant for her. Wild with eagerness she read the first few lines. Joy of joys! had she needed confirmation of his love, here it was in all its fulness. Controlling her impatience with a mighty effort, she rushed to her own room. She locked the door; then she flung herself upon her bed, and burst into a passion-flood of tears; tears of joy, pure and unmingled. There could be no more doubt; he whose image had so long been enshrined in her heart, had her own image enshrined in his.

Evidently he had in secret loved her long, but it was the thought of separation from her that had brought forth the expression of his

feelings she had just heard in the study. O, what happiness ! It seemed as though the very spring-tide of heaven-sent joy were welling up within her. Her soul sank in the sweet waters. Anxiety transfigured into certainty, hope into fruition, the crude possibilities of the past ripened into the golden realities of the present, the loneliness of an unloved soul lit up on a sudden with the most blessed of companionships—these were the phantasmal images that flitted across the retina of her mind, as ever and anon she read those impassioned lines.

Meanwhile Arthur, still sitting in the little study, kept wondering to himself at the deep attachment Louise seemed to feel for her aunt.

And Herr Borngart, returning in due time with the *droschky*, was surprised and disgusted to find that Louise was not ready.

Thus we all walk round each other !

END OF VOL. I.





